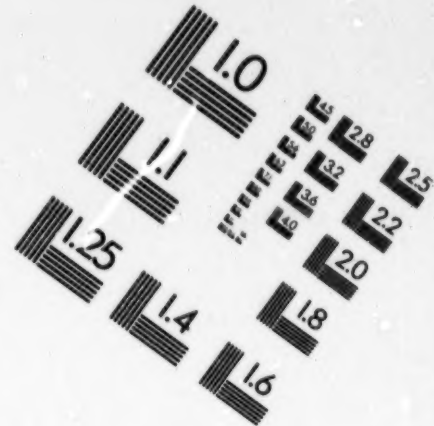
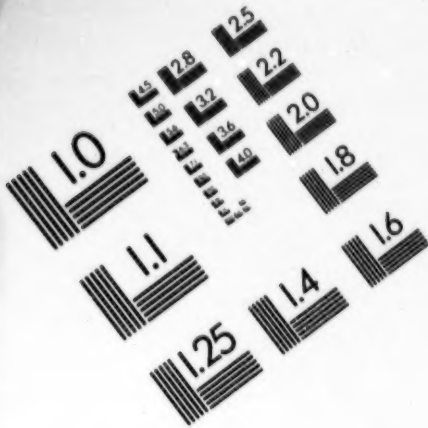


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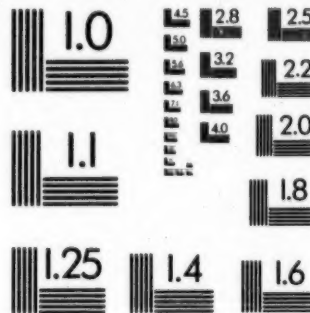
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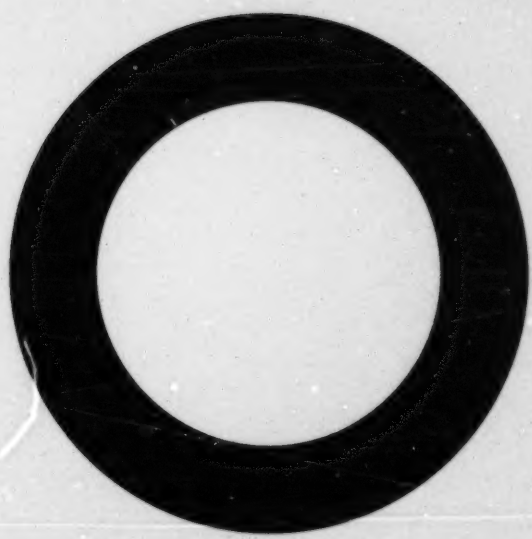
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Security Council

Distr.: General
12 March 2014

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 7133rd (closed) meeting of the Security Council

**Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday,
12 March 2014, at 3 p.m.**

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

“On 12 March 2014, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 7133rd meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

“The President invited Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure.

“The Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries heard a briefing by Mr. Kobler.

“Members of the Council, Mr. Kobler and representatives of participating contributing countries had an exchange of views.”





Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7134th meeting

Thursday, 13 March 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Asselborn	(Luxembourg)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Lithuania	Mrs. Murmokaitė
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.



The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister of Ukraine, and request the Protocol Officer to escort him to his seat at the Council table.

Mr. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister of Ukraine, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: I will focus my briefing on two aspects: recent developments in Ukraine and the work of the United Nations.

It is a reflection of the severity of this crisis and its possible wider ramifications that the Council is meeting to discuss Ukraine today for the second time this week and for the sixth time since 1 March. Serious attention has been accorded to this issue by the Council, in addition to multiple multilateral and bilateral diplomatic efforts, all aimed at seeking a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

The frequency of the deliberations, however, is also a reflection of the fact that, as the international community, we have not yet been able to deliver on our obligation — of which the Secretary-General has reminded us so often — to contribute to the de-escalation of tensions in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Although it has so far proved elusive, the path towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis is still open. Let us seize it.

I will first speak about the developments in Ukraine. Since my last briefing to the Council (see S/PV.7131), the Secretary-General's concern about the deteriorating situation in Crimea and rising tensions in eastern Ukraine has further deepened. In Crimea, the seizure and blockade of Ukrainian military bases, as well as the majority of the State border service facilities, continue. There have been reports that a military hospital has been taken over by unidentified military personnel. On 11 March, it was reported that the Crimean authorities had closed down the airspace of the peninsula to all commercial flights except those to and from Moscow, citing the need to keep so-called provocateurs away from the peninsula.

We understand that the referendum called by the authorities in Crimea is expected to go ahead on Sunday, 16 March. There are no indications to the contrary.

On 11 March, Crimea's Parliament adopted a "declaration of independence of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea". On the same day, the Parliament of Ukraine, citing specific articles of the country's Constitution, adopted a resolution urging the Parliament of Crimea to

"reconsider its decision of 6 March 2014 and bring it in line with the Constitution of Ukraine and the Constitution of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, approved by the Law of Ukraine of 23 December 1998".

The resolution further stated that if the parliament of Crimea failed to do so by 12 March 2014, the Parliament of Ukraine would "initiate the issue of early termination of powers of the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea".

Turning to United Nations activities, the Secretary-General continues his active efforts to speak with all relevant parties with the aim of seeking a peaceful resolution of the ongoing crisis. To that end, he will receive Mr. Yatsenyuk later this afternoon.

As I stated on Monday, the scheduled referendum has further complicated an already difficult and volatile situation. In that context, I regret to report to the Council that the local authorities have denied the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Mr. Ivan Šimonović, access to Crimea, citing their lack of readiness to receive his visit and an inability to provide security.

Upon his departure from Ukraine, Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović intends to report on

the human rights situation throughout the country. For Crimea, he will have to rely on, *inter alia*, reports from the residents of Crimea, foreign diplomats based in Crimea and international non-governmental organizations, with whom he has been in contact. Given the vast divergences in reports about what is actually happening on the ground in Crimea, we would have much preferred that Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović had been able to collect first-hand accounts himself.

Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović has so far held meetings in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Lviv, including with representatives of local administrations, the Russian minority, non-governmental organizations, including a representative of the Crimean Tatars, and other civil society representatives, as well as with ombudspersons. During his mission, he has also continued to discuss options with the authorities for practical human rights measures that could be taken to strengthen human rights protection and contribute to de-escalation.

The human rights monitoring mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is set to become operational in Ukraine by this coming Monday. In the light of the unpredictable situation, which could affect human rights, the Secretary-General is considering asking Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović to extend his mission.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the Secretary-General has called for a peaceful resolution that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Secretary-General continues to advocate for a resolution of the crisis in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. He appeals to all parties to avoid hasty actions or provocative rhetoric and to engage in direct and constructive dialogue in order to forge a peaceful way forward. He also continues to remind all parties that democratic values and international human rights norms must be upheld for all the people of Ukraine, including minorities. As part of the United Nations efforts, we also continue to closely coordinate our activities with key players and relevant regional organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

In the highly charged atmosphere in Ukraine, exacerbated by a lack of trust and fear, the potential for intentional or unintentional escalation or miscalculations is real. We underscore that all sides must avoid unilateral actions that could further raise tensions and make de-escalation more difficult. It is

high time for constructive engagement. Instability in Ukraine is in no one's interests and will have dire consequences for the region and the world.

The Secretary-General, under the auspices of his good offices, is the Council's partner in supporting and facilitating a peaceful resolution through dialogue. We are convinced that with genuine and concerted efforts by the international community, we can together pull Ukraine back from the brink.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Prime Minister of Ukraine.

Mr. Yatsenyuk (Ukraine): It is a great honour for me to address the primary body that is responsible for peace, stability and security in the world. As far as I know, this is the sixth extraordinary meeting of the Security Council. The Council is well aware of what is happening on the ground but let me additionally report on the most recent developments in Ukraine. My country has faced military aggression by a neighbouring country that is a permanent member of the Security Council. There is no reason for that aggression; there are no grounds for it. It is absolutely and entirely unacceptable in the twenty-first century to resolve any kind of conflict with tanks, artillery and boots on the ground.

The Russian Federation has violated a number of bilateral and multilateral treaties that were signed between Ukraine and Russia. We strongly believe that Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states that

"all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations"

is not questioned by anyone. We still believe that we have a chance to resolve this conflict in a peaceful manner, and we commend and praise the Ukrainian military that have refrained from the use of any force.

We would like to be very clear and say that the military presence has been clearly identified. This is a Russian military presence, with Russian number plates on its vehicles. We urge the Russian Federation to pull back its military forces deployed in Crimea to their barracks and to start real talks and negotiations in order to tackle this conflict.

This is not an internal conflict. This conflict goes beyond the borders of Ukraine. Let me recall that in 1994, Ukraine abandoned its nuclear weapons. We gave up one of the largest arsenals of nuclear weapons — the third largest in the world — and, under the Budapest Memorandum, the signatories guaranteed the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of the Ukrainian State. The way our Russian neighbours — and I believe that if we talk real talks with Russia, they could be real partners — acted undermines the entire global security and nuclear non-proliferation programme, as after these actions it would be very difficult to convince anyone in the world not to have nuclear weapons.

I would like to reiterate again that the Ukrainian Government is absolutely open. We want to have talks, we do not want to have any kind of military aggression.

I shall now address the Russian Federation.

(spoke in Russian)

We are looking for an answer to the question of whether Russians want war. As the Prime Minister of Ukraine, which for decades had warm and friendly relations with Russia, I am convinced that Russians do not want war, and I hope that the Russian Government and the Russian President will heed the wishes of their people and return to the negotiating table to engage in dialogue and solve this conflict.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of Luxembourg.

I thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his briefing. I welcome His Excellency Mr. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister of Ukraine, to the Council and thank him for his statement. His speech was very moving.

The situation in Ukraine is serious, in particular in Crimea. We cannot remain indifferent given the crisis the country is undergoing. Despite increasing tensions, we would like to believe that there is still time to avoid the worst — the annexation of Crimea by force. We hope that this public meeting of the Security Council — the body that, under the Charter of the United Nations, has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and international security — will help to strengthen the efforts of the entire international community in favour of a peaceful settlement of the crisis in your country.

Luxembourg is deeply concerned by the crisis. During my trip to Kyiv on Monday as part of a working visit with my colleagues, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Belgium and the Netherlands, I came to a personal realization of the courage and resilience the Ukrainian people have shown over recent weeks. I also had the opportunity to observe the restraint and composure of Ukraine at a time when it is being faced with the violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity in Crimea.

The decision taken on 1 March by the Council of the Russian Federation to authorize the use of the Russian armed forces on the territory of Ukraine and the actions taken on the ground over the past two weeks constitute flagrant violations of international law, especially the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act. They go against the commitments to Ukraine undertaken by Russia under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and under the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Russia and Ukraine, signed in 1997.

The main reason given by Russia for to justify its actions, that is to say threats against the rights of Russian speakers and Russian communities in Crimea, has been proved to be baseless, as noted recently the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). We regret that it was not possible for the Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations for Human Rights to visit Crimea to corroborate that claim of the OSCE.

The holding on 16 March of a referendum on the status of Crimea is in both form and substance in violation of the Constitution of Ukraine. We call on Russia to cease all actions of support to that referendum. The great and powerful Russian Federation has no need to either encourage or to take advantage of this charade of a referendum, whose ballot papers do not even offer the option of voting against. If the referendum is held anyway, the international community will in no way recognize its outcome.

We are no longer in the era of Yalta or the time of divvying up the European continent. It must be possible to find a peaceful way out of this crisis that takes the interests of all parties concerned — including, of course, those of Russia — into account. The destabilization of Ukraine serves the interests of no one in the long term. We recognize Russia's historical ties

with Ukraine, including in the economic and cultural areas. We welcome the spirit of openness of the Prime Minister of Ukraine and his readiness to engage in negotiations — yet further reason for Russia to take the outstretched hand of Ukraine to establish a direct dialogue to defuse the crisis.

A lasting political solution to the Ukrainian crisis will also require inclusive political dialogue within Ukraine itself. Such dialogue must include all democratic political forces and all regions. It must reflect the diversity of Ukrainian society, the aspirations of all Ukrainians and the need to respect the rights of all Ukrainians. We support the efforts of the Government and the Parliament of Ukraine to promote such dialogue, which could, in our view, lead inter alia to a strengthening of the federal character of the Ukrainian State. But it is up to the Ukrainians alone to decide their destiny. Ukraine belongs only to Ukrainians.

As I said at the outset, I want to believe that it is still possible to avoid the worst and that there is still time to find a peaceful solution in keeping with the principles of our Organization and with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. Luxembourg encourages the continuation of intensive diplomatic efforts to establish a multilateral mechanism — a contact group bringing together key stakeholders, including Russia. The mechanism should allow us to initiate a military de-escalation, starting with a withdrawal of Russian forces to their places of permanent deployment. It should also permit the launching of direct dialogue between the Russian and Ukrainian authorities.

I welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, and encourage them to pursue their mission of good offices. Luxembourg supports the efforts of the OSCE, in close cooperation with the United Nations and other international actors, to deploy a special observer mission, above all in Crimea and other regions of Ukraine, in agreement with the host country. Such a mission would assess the facts and respect for human rights, and promote dialogue on the ground in order to ease tensions and normalize the situation.

In conclusion, let me reiterate once again our call on all parties concerned, in particular Russia, to give priority to dialogue over violence and international law over the law of the strongest. The time has come

to step up diplomatic efforts to reach a solution to the Ukrainian crisis that respects Ukraine's political independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity in the interests of peace, stability and prosperity in Europe.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Power (United States of America): This meeting comes at a time when every day we are seeing an ever starker contrast between the conduct of the authorities in Kyiv and the conduct of the authorities in Moscow. Let me consider each in turn.

Ukraine's Government is placing a priority on internal reconciliation, plans for free and fair elections, and political inclusivity. It has proposed the creation of a task force to consider the possibility of enhanced autonomy for Crimea within Ukraine. Ukrainian leaders have made clear the future they wish for their people — a future of pluralism, prosperity and dignity; a future free of corruption and cronyism; a future in which the Ukrainian people do not have to choose between East and West.

The Government of Ukraine has been unwavering in its pledge to honour all of its international agreements, including those covering Russian military bases. Ukraine has also shown remarkable restraint over the past few weeks with respect to the use of its armed forces. As evidenced today by the statement of Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, Ukraine's voice throughout this crisis has been one of reason, support for the rule of law and restraint in the face of provocation. Its Government was voted in nearly unanimously by the Rada and has since enjoyed broad support across the political spectrum, including from former President Yanukovich's former party. The Government also includes representatives from across the country, east and west, north and south.

Ukraine's leadership is properly focused on the needs of its people. Yesterday in Washington, D.C., the Prime Minister met with President Obama and other leaders of my Government, and also with top officials of the International Monetary Fund. The Prime Minister's goal is to stabilize his country's finances, curb corruption, and lay the groundwork for progress under a new Government to be elected peacefully.

freely and fairly by all the people of Ukraine on 25 May. These elections, which are just over two months away, will give any citizen who has a different vision for Ukraine the chance to be heard. It will give those who wish to shape Ukraine's future the chance to be elected. Ukraine's efforts to stabilize its economy and the coming elections merit the wholehearted support of every member of the Council and of the broader international community.

In Moscow, we see a different kind of leadership. Russia has pursued a course of military action from the outset. At the very start of the crisis, Russia massed its forces along Ukraine's border for military exercises, while supporting efforts inside Crimea to take control of Ukrainian border posts, surround Ukrainian military facilities, seize control of public facilities, and replace Ukrainian media with Russian stations. President Putin asked for and received authorization from the Federation Council to use military force in Crimea, and today there are reportedly more than 20,000 Russian troops in the region. Although Moscow justified its actions in the name of protecting ethnic Russians, Russian troops have repeatedly obstructed international monitors and mediators and denied them access, even though their task is to ensure that the rights of minorities are not violated. This is not the behaviour of people who believe that they have truth and law on their side.

The self-anointed Crimean leaders set a referendum with full backing from Russia. That date was to be 25 May. They then reset the date for 16 March, allowing less than two weeks to prepare for and carry out a vote — two weeks on an issue of monumental importance, risking grave destabilizing consequences, in defiance of the Ukrainian Constitution and in defiance of international law. The referendum ballot that will be put to voters contains no option to vote for the status quo. Ballots with nothing checked will reportedly be ruled invalid. As the vote approaches this weekend, the Russian military intervention continues, and we learned this morning of new military operations by Russian troops involving artillery batteries, assault helicopters and at least 10,000 additional soldiers near the Ukrainian border.

The proposed 16 March referendum on the status of Crimea is everything that the scheduled 25 May election is not. If the 25 May election offers an opportunity under the law for all Ukrainians to participate in charting their shared future, Sunday's referendum in Crimea is hastily planned, unjustified and divisive. Ukraine's

Constitution requires that any change to its territory be achieved only through a national referendum. Because the Government has not authorized such a measure, the proposed balloting on 16 March would violate Ukraine's sovereignty. Any referendum on Crimea must be conducted within the bounds of Ukrainian law. Accordingly, the United States joins with others in calling for the suspension of that ill-conceived initiative, which cannot be recognized as legitimate, especially when carried out against the backdrop of a foreign military incursion. We also call on the Russian Federation to refrain from further actions in support of this dangerous undertaking.

The only true solution to the current crisis is through diplomacy. My Government strongly supports direct talks between the Russian Federation and the Government of Ukraine, to be conducted, if necessary, with appropriate help from the international community. Secretary Kerry will meet with Foreign Minister Lavrov tomorrow in the hope of finding a way off this path of confrontation. Given the risk of conflict, none of us can afford to leave any stone unturned.

But Russia has to want a diplomatic solution. The diplomatic path remains both viable and desirable, because the way forward is clear. Russian forces must return to their bases and Russia must honour its agreements with Ukraine. All countries must respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and seek to resolve disputes through peaceful means. Every country must fulfil its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and its commitments under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum and the Helsinki Final Act. Ukraine and the Russian Federation must abide fully by their bilateral agreements, including the 1997 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership and the 1997 basing agreement.

These steps, each in accordance with prior agreements, each consistent with international law, each in keeping with the best interests of the people of Ukraine, are all that is needed to end this crisis in a way that respects the rights and interests of everyone involved. In accordance with these principles, the United States is proposing a draft resolution for the Council's consideration that would endorse a peaceful solution to the Ukraine crisis based on international law and the Council's mandate to act, when necessary, to ensure global security and peace.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my Government's belief that, to resolve this crisis, what is needed now

is for a climate of restraint to replace confrontation, openness to replace obstructionism, and peaceful dialogue to replace coercion. This is the moment to show that laws matter, rules matter, and territorial integrity matters. If we do not come together, if we do not send a clear signal of our shared commitments, we will live with the consequences in Crimea and well beyond. We will look back on this moment and wish we had come together with a unified voice before the consequences became dire and innocent lives were lost.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I welcome Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk to the Security Council today. The United Kingdom stands side by side with the Ukrainian people in this time of crisis.

We commend Mr. Yatsenyuk, his Government and the people and armed forces of Ukraine for the remarkable restraint they have shown in the face of repeated provocation. Because of their strength of will, there is still a chance for a peaceful diplomatic solution.

Over the past week, we have heard in this Chamber and elsewhere an attempt to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the transitional Government in Ukraine. That is entirely unwarranted. Mr. Yanukovich deserted his office and his people in the midst of a crisis. Rather than work to implement the 21 February agreement, he abandoned his post. He was disowned by his own party and his removal was approved by an overwhelming majority of Members of Parliament.

The transitional Government that replaced him has already taken important steps — steps which uphold the spirit of the 21 February agreement and which lay the foundations for the future of Ukraine. They have restored the 2004 Constitution, they have begun the process of constitutional reform, and they have scheduled elections for 25 May. Those forthcoming elections will enable all Ukrainians to choose their own leaders. International monitors stand ready to ensure that those elections are free and fair. We urge all parties to support that effort.

We all agree that Ukraine needs our support in this time of transition. We all acknowledge that Ukraine has a pressing need for reform, for improvements to its political culture, for political stability and inclusiveness, and for an end to corruption. We all support the call for investigations into the violence of the past three months, we all back fresh elections under international observation, and we all agree on the importance of

protecting minority rights. Those points of agreement could form a basis around which we can coalesce to find a way forward.

But in order to move away from confrontation, the Russian Federation needs to accept that the cause of current instability in Ukraine lies not in Kyiv or in Donetsk. It comes from the actions of the Russian Federation in the Crimean peninsula where, against the express wishes of the Ukrainian Government, Russian military forces have taken control of a large part of the sovereign territory of Ukraine. We utterly condemn that blatant violation of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine and the flagrant breach of international law.

Russia claims that it is acting to protect its citizens. We have heard claims of Russian speakers and nationals under threat, the Russian language outlawed, rampant anti-Semitism, and hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing Ukraine. All those claims have been shown to be unfounded. The only part of Ukraine where minorities are under threat is in Russian-occupied Crimea, where Ukrainian forces are besieged in their bases and hundreds of members of the Tatar community are fleeing Crimea in fear, and where, as we heard just now from Mr. Feltman, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Šimonović has been denied access and the opportunity to investigate the disturbing developments taking place in Crimea. But those international observers who have visited Crimea, including Astrid Thors, the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, have found no evidence of any violations or threats to the rights of Russian speakers. They have, however, reported that, as a consequence of Russian actions, tensions between ethnic communities have increased.

We are deeply concerned by the decision of the so-called Crimean Government, installed by an armed putsch accompanied by Russian military intervention, to hold a referendum on 16 March to ascertain whether Crimea should become part of the Russian Federation. We are equally concerned by the legislative steps Russia is taking to facilitate that referendum.

It is absolutely clear that the proposed referendum would violate the Ukrainian Constitution. Article 73 sets out that any alteration to the territory of Ukraine must be resolved by an all-Ukrainian referendum. This is manifestly not an all-Ukrainian referendum.

Moreover, a free and fair referendum cannot possibly be held while Russian troops and Russian-backed militias dominate Crimea, where there is no electoral register, where there are restrictions on press freedom, and where voters will be casting their ballots under the barrel of a gun. Under such conditions, it is clear that any referendum vote in Crimea this weekend would be farcical. Worse, it would reopen ethnic divisions and risk a serious escalation in tension. Such a referendum will not be recognized by the international community.

A window of opportunity remains to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The window is narrow, but it exists. But finding that solution requires Russia to take a number of important steps. It must de-escalate. Its forces must return to their bases in Crimea and to the force level stipulated in the Black Sea Fleet basing arrangements. International monitors must be allowed into Crimea. Their presence will ensure that the rights of people belonging to minorities are fully respected by all parties. Russia should distance itself from the proposed referendum, clearly indicate that it will not seek to use the result as a pretext for annexation, and publicly reaffirm its commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. And Russia must agree to proposals for a dialogue with the Ukrainian Government, either directly or through a meaningful international diplomatic process.

The Council is meeting today in the gravest possible circumstances. A referendum is set to take place on Sunday that is illegal under Ukrainian law and the consequences of which will clearly be inflammatory — a destabilization with serious implications for the United Nations Charter and international norms.

There is no need for this. What we have just heard from Prime Minister Yatsenyuk confirms what many of us have been repeatedly emphasizing in the Council — that there is a clear willingness on the part of the Ukrainian Government to address Russia's stated concerns through peaceful dialogue, discussion and negotiation. When there is a readiness for dialogue, it makes no sense — indeed, it would be dangerous and irresponsible — for Russia to take unilateral actions or collude with unilateral actions of the Crimean authorities. The United Kingdom urges Russia to refrain from such unilateral actions and to distance itself from the referendum set to take place on Sunday.

And the United Kingdom urges the Security Council to make clear that Ukraine's sovereignty, unity

and territorial integrity must be respected and that any attempt to modify Ukraine's borders through unlawful means will not be tolerated.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the dignified statement we just heard from the Prime Minister of Ukraine.

If the current crisis were not so serious, we could wax ironic about the recent statements made by Russian diplomats to explain the apparent movement towards the annexation of Crimea. That irony is based on two facts. First, Russia constantly refers to the agreement of 21 February, negotiated by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Poland and France, which it refused to endorse when it was signed. It has become a very belated supporter of that agreement after Yanukovich's shameful flight.

Secondly — and here the irony borders on the surreal — Russia refers to the opinion of the International Court of Justice, which ruled that the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo was not illegal. Russia never recognized that opinion and always disputed Kosovo's independence. We therefore await with interest the logical conclusion of that unexpected conversion — Russia's recognition of Kosovo.

It is interesting to note that, in its opinion, the International Court of Justice established two conditions. One was the contested character of the territory, which led to the existence of a unique legal order, resolution 1244 (1999), and the second was the non-use of force. Obviously, those conditions have not been met in Crimea, the status of which was in no way contested either by Moscow or the local assembly, and where the Russian occupation allows one faction, which received 4 per cent of the votes in the local elections, to organize a mock referendum in the shadow of Russian bayonets. As French Minister for Foreign Affairs Fabius said this morning, "in Crimea Sunday the choice will be between 'yes' and 'yes'".

But for Russia it is not a question of law, coherence or logic; it is a question of using anything and everything to justify the unjustifiable — the blatant and cynical violation of the Charter of the United Nations, whose foundation is respect for the territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of its Members.

Everything is therefore in place for the annexation of Crimea by Russia regardless of legal wrangling that

will fool no one. The Western media sees in this matter the triumph of the Russian chess player who will have checkmated the international community. I play chess pretty badly, but I see here above all the immaturity of a player who cannot help but try to take the rook and ends up losing the game. Russia will gain Crimea and lose its credibility. What will happen to the credibility of Russian diplomacy when it tries to return to its foundations — respect for the territorial integrity of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of States — a diplomacy that encouraged and recognized the secession in Georgia and annexed a region of Ukraine? It will be met with nothing but sarcasm and a shrug.

What will happen to the credibility of Russian diplomacy in the former Soviet space? Are we not aware that certain independent States had been conquered by the Russian Empire before Crimea? Are we not aware that there are Russian and Russian-speaking minorities everywhere across that space? All that Russia will find there is distrust and anxiety. What will happen to the credibility of Russia in Ukraine? How can we imagine a reconciliation between the spoiler and the dispossessed? How can we understand the creation of a new Alsace-Lorraine a century after 1914? No one is asking Ukraine to choose between East and West. Russia has succeeded in doing so by leaving Ukraine no choice in the matter.

Finally, what will become of the rapprochement between the European Union and Russia when Russia tramples upon the values that led to the creation of the European Union and the resolve to break the cycle of invasions, occupations and demands? The European Union can only see its error in believing that its interlocutor shared the same objective. Russia will lose the game, but no one will emerge unscathed, because naked force will have imposed its logic. The fragile fabric of international law — the only guarantee and only barrier that small States have against the return of war — will have been torn.

In this moment of confusion, it is right for the Security Council to reaffirm the principles upon which the United Nations is founded. France therefore supports the draft resolution presented by the United States of America and calls for its being put to a vote before the holding of the referendum.

It is not too late. Let all of us, members and non-members of the Security Council alike, launch a

final appeal to Russia. We understand the passions and concerns. We want to respond to them, but through respect for law and the territorial integrity of Ukraine. That is the message that for a week now all our Heads of State and Government have been sending to the highest levels in Moscow.

Simple solutions are available; the principles are well known. I even cited them here a week ago: the return of the Russian forces to their barracks, the deployment of international observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to ensure the safety of the civilian population, the establishment of a Government of national unity in Kyiv, the swift holding of elections under international monitoring (see S/PV.7125). Let us negotiate the terms.

Time is running out. If the illegal referendum is held on Sunday, if Russia responds unfavourably, as it has announced it would, we will be forced to let Russia suffer all the political and economic consequences. I say "forced" because we do not want to follow a path leading backwards. I say "forced" because we will not have a choice in the face of such a major violation of international law on our continent.

Russia should resist the nationalist giddiness that has engulfed it and which is always ill advised. Russia should forget 1914 and understand that we are in 2014. It should return to the principles that it heralded for so long and that it tramples today. It should listen to what the entire international community is telling it. If it does, a solution is possible — a solution that respects the territorial integrity of Ukraine and its independence and ensures the rights of all communities of Ukraine. It should not lose the chess game for the sake of the limited and fleeting pleasure of taking a rook. That would not be a worthy display of the talent of Russian chess players, who are among the best in the world.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): It is increasingly alarming that the crisis and the turn of events in Ukraine poses a threat to the security of the entire region and continues to affect the daily lives of innocent people. While there are a number of diplomatic engagements under way in approaching the crisis, we believe it is important to take into account substantive issues that gave rise to the conflict in the first place thus addressing the grievances of all concerned parties.

We reiterate our support for the solidarity of all Ukrainian communities and maintain our call for an inclusive political Ukrainian-led dialogue that

recognizes the diversity of the Ukrainian people and emphasizes the protection of minorities and the Russian community. As the Security Council and the international community, we have a duty to find an end to the confrontation and allow the Ukrainian people to determine their own destiny and their own future in a genuine and impartial manner. We thank the United Nations leadership for its active role and steps taken thus far in an effort to de-escalate the situation as described to us by the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, whom I wish to thank personally.

We remain concerned that intensified rhetoric on all fronts is undermining efforts to find common ground. We reiterate our call on all parties to exercise extreme restraint during this volatile time and to resolve the issue through existing bilateral and multilateral arguments. We the international community must uphold our commitment to the principles of peace and security and do our part to ensure that there is no further deterioration of the crisis, which includes a call for all parties involved to commit to finding a peaceful solution.

Rwanda stands for respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations. In our view, it is time to focus our priority on achieving sustainable peace through genuine talks geared towards de-escalation of the situation and to encourage all concerned parties to deploy sustained efforts to defuse fear, hatred and other negative emotions that will worsen the situation.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to welcome the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Mr. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, and thank him for his clear briefing to the Security Council. The implications of the events in Ukraine, particularly in the region of Crimea, have reached a critical turning point, which requires concerted efforts to defuse the crisis, give precedence to the language of reason, and begin a direct dialogue between the parties concerned in order to end the crisis and prevent any further escalation. That will require urgent action on the part of the international community through the United Nations and other international organizations, and bilateral contacts aimed at creating an atmosphere conducive to enabling the parties to overcome the causes of the crisis and find a mechanism for the dialogue and negotiation necessary to achieve solutions that will preserve the interests of all parties concerned.

In this regard, Jordan welcomes the efforts of the Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the proposals of its presidency, including on the establishment of an international contact mechanism to facilitate dialogue among the parties and the despatch of a fact-finding mission to Ukraine to gather information and evaluate the security situation. We also support efforts to implement these proposals as soon as possible, given the current situation.

Jordan stresses the need to respect Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political, and not to interference in its internal affairs. We also call for compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. Jordan stresses the territorial integrity of Ukraine, all regions of which, including Crimea, are subject to Ukrainian sovereignty, in accordance with the provisions of international law and the relevant international conventions, including the 1994 Budapest Memorandum and the 1997 Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

We also affirm that the international community should help launch a political process in Ukraine that will include all parties and communities, including minorities, with a view to restoring peace, security and the rule of law in Ukraine. Such a political process must ensure the rights of all citizens of Ukraine and pave the way for presidential elections in May.

Diffusing the crisis in Ukraine — particularly the region of Crimea — and ensuring respect for its Constitution and territorial integrity will prevent a further escalation of the crisis and avert threats to international peace and security. Jordan calls on all the parties concerned to create an environment conducive to resolving the crisis, refrain from escalation, and keep all options open for solutions aimed at preserving the rights and interests of all and restoring peace and security in the region.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): We thank the Luxembourg presidency for holding today's public meeting on the crisis in Ukraine and appreciate your presence here, Mr. Minister. We are grateful for the participation of and statement by Prime Minister Yatsenyuk of Ukraine, and for the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Feltman. We express our firm support for the political process towards elections on 25 May, under the Government of Ukraine.

The Republic of Korea remains deeply concerned over the continuing escalation of tensions in Ukraine. We are particularly troubled by the decision of the Crimean Parliament to hold a referendum and its unilateral declaration of independence. Those actions will only further exacerbate the already tense situation. Without a doubt, it is vital that the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine be fully respected. Ukrainians should retain full power over their country's affairs, without intervention or influence by outside forces. In that vein, we urge the full observance of all relevant international and bilateral agreements, particularly the Charter of the United Nations and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum.

The unabated military activities in Crimea, which are violating the sovereignty of Ukraine, are also a source of grave concern. Any military presence or activity not authorized by the Ukrainian Government and in breach of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine must immediately cease. We welcome the ongoing diplomatic efforts of the international community to de-escalate the situation, in particular those of the Secretary-General and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We also underscore the importance of bilateral dialogue between Ukraine and Russia.

The Republic of Korea believes that credible international monitoring mechanisms will have a notable calming effect on the ground. In that connection, it is worrying that the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and OSCE personnel have been denied access to the Crimean region. Unhindered access must be ensured for such missions. Any action threatening the safety and security of international personnel must be stopped.

The stability and prosperity of Ukraine are critical not only to peace in Europe, but also far beyond. We truly hope that Ukraine will emerge from the crisis as a strong, inclusive and prosperous democracy, led only by the will and aspirations of the Ukrainian people. It is the responsibility of the international community to assist the people of Ukraine in fulfilling that goal.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (spoke in Chinese): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing. China has been closely following developments in the situation on the ground in Ukraine, which remains highly complex and sensitive as we speak. The situation in Ukraine today is the result of a complex

interlinkage among historic factors and circumstances on the ground.

China regrets the recent clashes that took place in the streets of Kyiv. China also condemns acts of extremism and violence. Efforts to address Ukrainian affairs should take the lawful rights and interests of all ethnic communities in Ukraine into consideration with a view to restoring the normal social order as soon as possible. On several public occasions, China has clearly stated its principled position on the question of Ukraine. It continues to address the issue objectively and impartially. It is China's long-standing position not to interfere in the internal affairs of other States and to respect their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

My country is of the view that all parties must now remain calm, exercise restraint, prevent a further escalation of the situation, and adhere to the approach of resolving the crisis through political and diplomatic channels. It is our hope that all parties concerned will promote communication and coordination, put the interests of all ethnic communities in Ukraine above everything else, keep their eyes on the big picture of maintaining regional peace and stability, and settling their differences by appropriate means.

China supports the constructive efforts and good offices of the international community in de-escalating the situation in Ukraine. We are open to all proposals and plans that would help to ease tensions in the country. We remain committed to playing a constructive role in achieving a political settlement of the question of Ukraine.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I want to welcome Prime Minister Yatsenyuk and to thank him for his briefing. I also want to thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman for providing an update on the situation in Ukraine.

In a world that is already deeply embroiled in turmoil in most regions, the current crisis in Ukraine is one crisis too many. The world can ill afford it. Nigeria remains unequivocal in highlighting the precarious and delicate nature of the situation in Ukraine. The imperative for a cautious approach by all parties to avoid exacerbation of the crisis could not be more urgent. That consideration is even more pertinent today as developments on the ground indicate that so little has changed since our last meeting in the Council on this issue (see S/PV.7131).

The fundamental principle at stake in the crisis is respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a State Member of the United Nations. We want to remind all concerned to uphold the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly as concerns the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In order to engender a peaceful settlement of the current impasse, there must be understanding. There must be mutual trust. There must be flexibility and a willingness between the parties to engage in constructive and peaceful dialogue. We want to urge the parties not to slam the door on dialogue, which represents a priceless opportunity for all issues to be discussed towards a peaceful and mutually acceptable resolution of the crisis.

The foundations for reconciliation are not far-fetched. We can find them in previous agreements. The Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership, adopted in 1990 and renewed in 1997, are valued and credible instruments that provide a ready framework for resolving the crisis in Ukraine, and we call on all parties to abide by their commitments and obligations under those instruments. We also note that interlocutors have a vital role to play in ameliorating the situation.

While the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Mr. Ivan Šimonović, is making progress in discussing human rights-related issues with stakeholders across Ukraine, we regret that he has had to cancel his visit to Crimea, which is at the core of the current crisis. We hope that he will be able to undertake that visit in the near future, because it is critical.

We would also like to see access granted to observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in order to allow them to undertake an objective assessment of the situation on the ground. That, we believe, would foster a deeper understanding of the crisis. We want to reiterate our position that the referendum planned for Crimea contravenes the Constitution of Ukraine and is therefore illegitimate. For that reason, we call on the authorities of Crimea to postpone, and indeed cancel, the impending referendum. To go ahead with it would add insult to injury. Our ardent desire is to see a united, peaceful and democratic Ukraine where all citizens and communities can live side by side in peace, security and harmony.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile expresses its profound concern about the very serious consequences of the announced referendum in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the holding of which

could lead to an escalation of the crisis in Ukraine. It is critical for the Council to contribute to ensuring the maximum stability and the moderation of the parties, and to use all appropriate means to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

We thank you, Sir, for organizing this timely meeting, and the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Mr. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, for his participation in this meeting. We also thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his briefing, and welcome the work of the Secretary-General and the mission of good offices in Ukraine of Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Robert Serry, and Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović.

Chile reiterates the necessity to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It is essential that all parties involved in the situation refrain from actions that are in breach of the Charter of the United Nations or international treaties and pacts to which Ukraine is a party. In that context, it is essential to respect the rule of law at both the international and national levels. At the national level, that must be reflected in full respect for the Ukrainian Constitution, which is particularly relevant and important today on the eve of the referendum to be convened by the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

Chile appeals to the authorities of Ukraine to pursue their efforts to establish an inclusive national political process. At the international level, the parties must respect and adhere not only to the Charter of the United Nations, but also to the 1997 Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership and the Budapest Memorandum. All the mechanisms provided for in those instruments should be used to find a peaceful solution to the dispute. We call for compliance with the Budapest Memorandum, which obliges the parties to respect the independence, sovereignty and current borders of Ukraine and to refrain from the threat or use of force to undermine the territorial integrity or political independence of the country. By the same token, we recall paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), which states:

“Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”

We regret that Mr. Šimonović was not allowed to enter Crimea and that the observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are still being prevented from doing so. It is essential for Mr. Šimonović and the observers to have secure access to Crimea. We urge that the efforts of the United Nations and the OSCE to find a peaceful solution to the crisis not be hindered. Chile also reiterates its call on the Russian Federation and Ukraine to make use of existing mechanisms of dialogue to find that solution. We need to give time to diplomacy.

In conclusion, I reaffirm that it is for the people of Ukraine, in all its diversity and unity, to decide its own destiny in the framework of an inclusive process that guarantees the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and respect for the rights of minorities.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I thank you, Mr. President, for your presence in presiding over this open debate at such a critical time. I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing and welcome Prime Minister Yatsenyuk of Ukraine at this very difficult and decisive time for him and his country. It is important that the Council has heard directly from him today. We should commend him and the Ukrainian authorities for their restraint and courage in the face of continued provocation and for their efforts to design a new and inclusive future for Ukraine.

We welcome all international efforts to find solutions to the crisis. We commend the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for their efforts. We support yesterday's statement by the Group of Seven, which spoke with one voice in urging Russia to join them and work together through diplomatic processes to resolve the crisis. We also commend the efforts of the United States to find a solution through engagement with both Russia and Ukraine. Russia must similarly show itself ready to engage seriously and constructively with the Ukrainian leaders to resolve the crisis.

In our numerous meetings over the past two weeks, the messages from Council members have been stark. Ukraine's territorial integrity must be respected. Russia must take immediate, deliberate and definitive steps to de-escalate the situation, including, critically, ordering Russian troops to return to their bases, and must allow independent monitors access to Crimea to verify the situation on the ground. Russia and Ukraine must engage with each other in direct dialogue at senior levels.

However, we have seen no sign of change in Russian actions. Instead, we have seen further Russian efforts to consolidate its control of Ukrainian territory in Crimea. It has extended its control of air, sea and land access to the peninsula. The closure of Crimea's airspace to non-Russian commercial air traffic has now further severed connections between Crimea and the rest of Ukraine. Russian forces have seized Ukrainian military and Government facilities and laid siege to others, including the naval headquarters. They have reportedly laid mines in a number of locations. Such actions cannot be justified by a perceived threat to Russian assets or nationals. OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Ms. Thors found no evidence of violations or threats to the rights of Russian speakers in Crimea during her visit.

Media freedom has also been severely suppressed in a clear attempt to prevent coverage of what is occurring. Attacks on journalists have intensified. Despite the repeated calls for independent verification of the situation on the ground, unarmed OSCE monitors have also been denied access to Crimea three times now. United Nations representatives have been similarly unable to conduct visits. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Ukraine, Robert Serry, was threatened by armed men and Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Šimonović has been denied entry to Crimea. Reports of intimidation of Crimean Tatars make it all the more crucial that human rights assessment missions proceed as planned.

The Crimean Parliament's announcement of a referendum, to be held on Sunday to decide whether Crimea should secede from Ukraine, was a dangerous further escalation of tensions and deeply destabilizing; so, too, were statements by Russian parliamentarians that Russia would formally accept the results of that referendum. Any such referendum would contravene article 73 of the Ukrainian Constitution, which provides that any alteration of the sovereign territorial boundaries of Ukraine can be decided only through an all-Ukraine national referendum. It would be inconsistent with chapter X of the Constitution, which sets out the constitutional role of Crimea within Ukraine. That has been underlined by both Ukraine's Acting President Turchynov and Prime Minister Yatsenyuk.

The Ukrainian Parliament also demanded on 11 March that the referendum be cancelled. The Crimean Parliament itself has no standing on that issue.

We also note that the referendum will be conducted at a time when Russian forces are in control of Crimea.

For all those reasons, the results of the proposed referendum will be inherently illegitimate and will not be accepted by the international community. We welcome the United States proposal that the Council adopt a draft resolution that would make this clear. We would support adopting such a draft resolution before the Sunday referendum.

However, it is not too late to resolve the crisis peacefully, but the window for that is rapidly closing. The international community has shown its willingness to support efforts to resolve the crisis, the continuation of which will not only have terrible consequences for the people of Ukraine but will also reverberate far beyond that. The Ukrainian Parliament has asked the United Nations for its support and we should remain ready to assist. International principles that are at the core of international relations not only in Europe but globally, and that matter fundamentally to each and every sovereign State, are at stake.

For diplomacy to have a chance, Russia needs to actively de-escalate the situation. It must pull back its forces to their bases, decrease their numbers to agreed levels. It must allow international observers access to Crimea to view the situation on the ground and accept the proposed OSCE monitoring mission. It must also demonstrate its respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including by desisting from any support for the referendum proposed this Sunday. And it must engage in direct dialogue with Ukraine, as Ukraine has repeatedly requested, either bilaterally or through diplomatic mechanisms, such as the contact group that has been proposed. The international community has offered its assistance and dialogue. It is now imperative that Russia work with international partners to ensure that the crisis is resolved peacefully.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I shall respond directly to the direct question put to me by Mr. Yatsenyuk. The Russians do not want war, and I am sure that the Ukrainians do not want it either. Furthermore — and this is something that I want to underscore in particular — we see no grounds for viewing the situation in such terms. We do not want any further exacerbation of the situation.

Russia did not provoke the spiral of destabilizing violence that has determined developments in Ukraine

in recent months. Some colleagues who spoke here before me today painted an almost idyllic picture of the situation in Ukraine. They claimed that if it had not been for Russia, everyone in Ukraine would live long and happy lives. Some others simply tried to claim a role in the crisis. For them, it seems to be a game; for us, it is an issue of lives and the fundamental norms of international law. If we are to understand how to normalize the situation, we need to objectively analyse the root causes of the current crisis.

We have already said in this Chamber that there were no objective grounds for Ukraine's deteriorating situation over the past few months. All that was at stake was the need for President Yanukovich and his Government to adopt a decision on whether it was beneficial to Ukraine to sign the association agreement with the European Union that was proposed by Brussels. The reaction to Kyiv's decision to refrain from that for now while still maintaining a so-called European future outlook was totally unfounded. The escalation was provoked both by forces in Ukraine and by Western sympathizers with that country.

Having refused to engage in trilateral negotiations on the economic problems of Ukraine, under the European Union-Ukraine-Russia format, Brussels and, for some reason, Washington, D.C., started to demand, almost in the form of an ultimatum, that Kyiv sign the association agreement, which had significant economic consequences for Ukraine. They appealed not only to the Government but also to the street.

Of course, the people of Ukraine have the right to peaceful political protests, but why turn the Maidan into a militarized camp? Why send columns of militants, well-trained and well-equipped by someone, into the centre of Kyiv? Why provoke the representatives of law-enforcement agencies by pelting them with paving stones and Molotov cocktails, using bulldozers as weapons of street terror? Are the seizure of administrative buildings and political party headquarters, and the killing and torturing of those arrested there — for example, in the torture chambers set up in the trade unions building — consistent with democracy? The acts of violence that took place in Kyiv clearly require careful international investigation.

The picture painted by Kyiv and Western propaganda completely contradicts those reports, which show that the same people fired on positions held by the law-enforcement agencies and by the demonstrators. There were also recent reports that they also fired on

the headquarters of the so-called Commandant of the Maidan who now leads Ukraine's National Security Council.

Why have the representatives of Western countries fuelled the enmity and unrest? Why did the Speaker of the Parliament of Lithuania, in a speech to the Maidan, call for continued anti-governmental actions? Why were there Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other high-level civil servants and representatives of some Western States among the demonstrators? Why was there such blatant interference in the domestic affairs of a State, in blatant disregard for its sovereignty?

However the activities of Victor Yanukovych during that period may be judged, no one in this Chamber can claim that he did not seek a possible compromise with the opposition. The post of Prime Minister was offered to Mr. Yatsenyuk. Why did he not seize that opportunity to prevent the country from falling into economic disaster? Why not seize not only the opportunity provided by offers from the European Union and the United States, but also by readiness of the Russian Federation to help with credits and lower fuel prices to begin to stabilize the economic situation?

Finally, why not seize the opportunity of the agreement of 21 February to end the stand-off, re-establish the normal political process, and cement the economic and political integrity of the country? Could it be that the forces seeking power and authority were not interested in democracy, but in a dictatorship, when they threatened all those who differed with them, including members of the Rada? As a result, the legitimate legal President was overthrown and forced to leave Kyiv under the threat of physical violence.

Those present in this Chamber know full well that the violent overthrow of an authority is illegal. Such actions have been repeatedly condemned, including in documents adopted by the Security Council. Instead of the Government of national unity provided for pursuant to the agreement of 21 February, a Government of the victors was established in Kyiv, as acknowledged by Mr. Yatsenyuk. A number of key positions, including that of Minister of Defence, went to representatives of the radical nationalist Freedom Party. In the resolution adopted in December 2012, the European Parliament characterized the views of that party as anti-Russian, anti-Semitic, xenophobic, and counter to the fundamental values of the European Union. It called on all pro-democracy parties in the Rada not to form coalitions with that party. Where are those European

values now? Are the new authorities in Ukraine sticking to them?

The real bulwark of those new forces is an even more radical organization, the so-called Right Sector, whose leader has made his presidential ambitions clear. The radicals have not laid down their weapons, as required by the agreement of 21 February. Moreover, they are restocking their arsenals with weapons seized from military depots. The new authorities have done nothing to organize a national dialogue to promote genuine constitutional reform, as stipulated in the agreement of 21 February.

They have done their best, however, to antagonize the eastern and south-eastern regions of Ukraine. First of all, they got rid of a law on languages that afforded official status to the Russian language, and then they eliminated the Russian-language versions of Government websites. Instead of engaging in dialogue, Kyiv sends its political commissars to the eastern region. Those who dissent are arrested, as happened with a popular governor of the Donetsk region who stated that he intended to participate in the presidential elections, and with former Governor Dobkin of the Kharkiv oblast. The fact is, the Kyiv authorities themselves are splitting their country in two.

A great deal has been said in the Council today, often with considerable passion, with regard to the situation in Crimea and the decision of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic to hold a referendum on to decide on annexation by Russia or on broader autonomous status within Ukraine. Some dispute the legitimacy of such a referendum. However, what is unacceptable is the manipulation of individual principles and norms of international law, arbitrarily wresting them from the general context not only of international law itself, but in particular of concrete political situations and historical specificities.

In each particular case, one must seek the right balance between the principles of territorial integrity and the right to self-determination. It is clear that the achievement of the right to self-determination in the form of separation from an existing State is an extraordinary measure. However, in the case of Crimea, it obviously arose as a result of the legal vacuum created by the violent coup against the legitimate Government carried out by nationalist radicals in Kyiv, as well as by their direct threats to impose their order throughout the territory of Ukraine.

A number of countries that have spoken out against the expression of the popular will of the Crimean people rushed to recognize the independence of Kosovo, which was declared without a referendum by a simple decision of Parliament, despite the protests of Belgrade and the fact that the declaration of independence took place against the backdrop of an illegal military operation by NATO countries in a situation in which the majority of the Serbian population was forced to leave the province. I shall not even speaking about resolution 1244 (1999), which retains all its validity in establishing an international protectorate over Kosovo.

It is well known that the concept of a referendum is not new. Referendums have been or will be held in Puerto Rico, Gibraltar, the Falkland Islands, Catalonia and Scotland. The legal and historical contexts, as well as the results of all those votes, are all quite different, but the fact remains that the inhabitants of those territories were or will be given the opportunity to express their free will. Why should the people of Crimea be an exception?

There are other interesting precedents. The Comoros declared their independence from France in 1975 and were accepted as a State Member of the United Nations consisting of four islands. However, in February 1976 France organized for the residents of one of those islands — Mayotte island — a referendum to determine whether they wanted to remain part of France or to be part of the new State of the Comoros. By a small majority, they voted against independence from France. The Head of State of the Comoros tried to keep that from happening. In February 1976, he requested that an emergency meeting of the Security Council be convened (see S/PV.1888). France's actions were characterized as naked aggression and an encroachment on the national unity of the Comorian State. He noted that under French law in force before the independence of the Comoros islands, the island of Mayotte was an inalienable part of Comorian territory. He also underscored the fact that the Comoros was accepted as a State Member at the United Nations as a State composed of four islands. It was all to no avail. Draft resolution S/11967 in support of the Comorian position was vetoed by France.

The Declaration of Independence of the United States refers to a situation in which it had become necessary for a people to dissolve the political ties connecting it to another people. Let us see how the people of Crimea view that position during the upcoming referendum.

Finally, some who have spoken in the Council referred to the actions of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea. We consider those references to be incorrect. The Russian Black Sea Fleet is in no way interfering in the situation leading up to the referendum, which has been proclaimed and organized by the Crimeans themselves.

Ms. Murmokaite (Lithuania): As Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Feltman noted in his statement, this is the sixth time since 1 March that we have met to address the crisis caused by Russian aggression against Ukraine. In the meantime, the Heads of State of the European Union have condemned the unprovoked violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation, and called on the later to immediately withdraw its armed forces to their areas of permanent stationing. That call was reinforced by a similar statement issued by the leaders of the Group of Seven and the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) to stress the illegality of the referendum in Crimea and call on all actors to refrain from supporting unconstitutional activities.

As a leader and a patriot, ex-President Yanukovich should have put Ukraine first and done everything within his power to normalize the situation. He should have led the implementation of the oft-cited 21 February agreement, which he signed very unwillingly and which Russia refused to co-sign, as eloquently pointed out by the French Ambassador. Instead, Yanukovich abandoned his country and fled, exposing it to partition and annexation. Under those circumstances, the Ukrainian Rada, whose legitimacy have never and cannot be challenged, appointed a new Prime Minister in accordance with the Ukrainian Constitution and by the overwhelming majority of votes, enabling the formation of a unity Government that is fully representative of the ethnic and geographical diversity of the Ukrainian population, as was also pointed out by our colleague from the United States.

We commend the incredible restraint and moral fortitude of the Ukrainian Government, its people and its military in the face of the continuous escalation of provocations and a massive propaganda onslaught. It speaks volumes on the Prime Minister's readiness and commitment to pursuing the peaceful resolution of the current crisis.

Never has a referendum been set up so hurriedly, and even that very short time frame was cut still shorter in a clear violation of Ukraine's Constitution and also the constitution of Crimea, which unambiguously states that Crimea shall be an integral part of Ukraine. The original inhabitants of Ukraine, Crimean Tatars, have spoken loudly against the referendum and Crimea's secession and have reaffirmed their desire to see their homeland as part of Ukraine. But their voices will not count, nor will the voices of many other ethnic groups inhabiting Crimea, including Ukrainians themselves, because the referendum is specifically designed to endorse secession. There is simply no other option but to say yes to partition.

Notably, in the meantime, Russia is fast-tracking legislation that will facilitate the annexation of Crimea — or any piece of any other country, for that matter. One can only imagine the shudders that is sending across the entire region, whose memories of the recent Soviet occupation and invasions are still very much alive.

As a signatory of the 1991 Almaty Declaration, the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, the 1997 Agreement between Russia and Ukraine on the Status of Conditions of the Presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on the Territory of Ukraine and the 1997 Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, the Russian Federation has repeatedly recognized Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Furthermore, as a signatory of the Budapest Memorandum, it has undertaken the obligation to protect and guarantee Ukraine's sovereignty, inviolability and territorial integrity, in exchange — as has been pointed out — for Ukraine's relinquishing its nuclear-weapons arsenal.

The blatant breach of bilateral obligations and international law by Russia is undermining the very foundation of international law as well as regional and international peace and security. We strongly call on all States to make it clear that they will not recognize the referendum and its outcome.

Nothing that has been said, including by the Russian Ambassador — nothing on Earth — warrants or justifies Russia's actions and those of the pro-Russian forces in Crimea. Whatever concerns — legitimate concerns — may be raised about the conditions of ethno-linguistic minorities, they could have and still can be readily addressed through existing regional

and international instruments. The Council of Europe has plenty of mechanisms to that effect and is ready to engage; so do the OSCE and the United Nations. Let those organizations do their job, just as they have done with success on multiple other occasions, especially since Ukraine has repeatedly invited monitors and representatives of those organizations and declared its openness to be visited, assessed, inspected and monitored. Ukraine has nothing to hide.

But its opponents do. Why else would certain forces try to do everything in their power to isolate Crimea before the illegal referendum? The pro-Russian forces propped up by the ever-growing Russian military presence on the peninsula have repeatedly denied access to OSCE teams, to Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Robert Serry, who was harassed and denied entry twice. Crimean Ukrainians are attacked and accused of being occupiers in their own country, taunted en masse as fascists and Nazis, simply for no other reason but being Ukrainian.

Crimean airspace is closed to flights, except those from and to Moscow. Waterways are blocked, electricity and supplies to Ukrainian forces cut. Ships are sunk at water entries to the peninsula, trenches dug and, as reported by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, landmines are being laid. Land access is monitored by so-called unidentified Russian-speaking men who are armed to the teeth. Crimea's information space has also been blocked. All Ukrainian information channels and the local Tatar network have been clamped down and replaced by Russian channels transmitting continuous anti-Ukrainian propaganda. Journalists have been threatened, assaulted and kidnapped.

It is in that context of Crimea's isolation, gunpoint tactics by pro-Russian forces and extreme levels of anti-Ukrainian hysteria that the illegal referendum is to take place this coming weekend, paving the way to Crimea's annexation by Russia. The crisis is deeply troubling. Besides violating the underlying principles of international law and of a country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, it also has a highly explosive human dimension. The anti-Ukrainian propaganda and a barrage of lies risk unleashing the most dangerous demons of hatred, with potentially devastating consequences for the region and international security as a whole.

We call on the Russian Federation to stop the warmongering and its dangerous propaganda campaign

aimed at its neighbours, and to use whatever little time remains for open dialogue and the participation of international mediation. While it is still possible, we appeal to the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops to their regular locations, accept the primacy of international law and reaffirm its respect for the Charter of the United Nations, engage in direct dialogue with Kyiv without any further delay, revert to existing mechanisms of crisis resolution, and accept the initiatives of the United Nations, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and whatever other initiatives there are that are aimed at preventing further escalation and launching international monitoring mechanisms.

The solution to the crisis in Ukraine can be based only on the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of the country, as well as on strict adherence to international law and international standards of behaviour. If this chance is missed, the consequences for the international order are difficult to assess, and the full responsibility for them will be Russia's to bear. The window of opportunity, as our British colleague has referred to it, is still open. It is up to Russia to keep it open, or to shut it in the face of the international community.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing. I welcome the transition Prime Minister of Ukraine, Mr. Yatsenyuk, and thank him for the information he has provided.

Chad notes with great concern the continuing escalation of the crisis in Ukraine, despite the repeated calls of the international community, in particular the Security Council, for calm and restraint. We think that it is still possible to take the path of national reconciliation and preservation of the unity of Ukraine through an inclusive process of dialogue between the different components and respecting diversity.

Chad also calls for the respect for territorial integrity, the non-use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. The parties must take the necessary steps to create a climate of dialogue with a view to achieving genuine national reconciliation and respecting human rights, more specifically, the rights of minorities. Chad supports international mediation for a peaceful outcome of the crisis and welcomes the efforts deployed by the Secretary-General towards that end.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express the appreciation of my delegation

for the commitment with which Luxembourg has served in its presidency of the Security Council, as can be seen in the fact that you, Mr. President, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, are presiding over today's meeting. We thank Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing and for his call. We value the good offices that the Secretary-General is employing. We acknowledge the various actors that are collaborating to reach a diplomatic solution of this crisis. We welcome the Prime Minister of Ukraine for his participation in today's meeting.

Argentina has been following with concern the situation in Ukraine, particularly since we received the note from the Permanent Representative of that country on 28 February (S/2014/136). The Council and the international community have given the issue intense attention as the situation has become increasingly complex.

The delegation of Argentina reiterates once again that it is essential that we stick to the principles that we undertook to uphold when we became Members of the United Nations. In particular, we must recall our commitment not to intervene in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of States. In light of that, we understand that the action of any State or international organization must preserve due respect for Ukraine's conduct of its internal affairs.

As a Member of the Organization, Argentina considers it essential to highlight the primary duty to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of all States. My country has sustained that principle throughout its history, even prior to the very existence of the United Nations, and will continue to do so unwaveringly.

We have followed with concern the evolution of Ukraine's domestic situation and listened attentively to the statements by the various authorities of that country before this Council. We are concerned about past and present violence and the possibility that it may worsen. We regret that, despite repeated appeals to all parties and key stakeholders to refrain from any action that could contribute to inflammatory rhetoric and to aggravating the situation, particularly unilateral acts on the ground, it has still not been possible to take substantive steps to establish constructive dialogue and good faith with the aim of resolving the current crisis.

It is essential that the international community and the actors in Ukraine themselves facilitate democratic

dialogue and contribute to finding peaceful solutions to the current situation. In that regard, the Argentine delegation wishes to emphatically appeal to all Ukrainian parties to refrain from taking positions and decisions that could make the situation worse or establish faits accomplis that hinder dialogue and the search for the necessary compromises that will make a comprehensive solution possible.

We hope that the internal evolution in Ukraine can take democratic paths, as that is the only way to be inclusive. At the same time, we consider it essential to observe strict respect for human rights and humanitarian law. Our own national experience in that regard teaches us that for any community, such commitment is essential to ensuring a future of peace and development with social inclusion and the full operation of democratic institutions. We hope that throughout the process due respect will be maintained for all minorities, whether ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious.

International efforts have been directed towards finding solutions through diplomatic channels. They have crystalized in high-level meetings in Paris and Rome, as well as in various proposals to deploy mediation or observation missions. While those initiatives have not been fruitful, diplomatic efforts for a rapprochement must be redoubled to alleviate tensions on the ground and, at the same time, open space for dialogue to resolve the crisis. The way out of the current crisis is political and must be peaceful and concerted.

The international community must actively contribute through mechanisms that the Ukrainians consider necessary or appropriate to achieve internal peace in the country. It is our hope that the competent regional organizations can constructively contribute in that regard. It is incumbent on all of us to refrain from exacerbating internal dissent and to strictly adhere to the principle of non-interference by military, economic or political means in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

As for the Security Council, we understand that our primary responsibility is to continue making concrete proposals that will contribute to a resolution of the crisis and to appropriate follow-up of the situation with a view to preserving international peace and security,

and, where appropriate, to adopt the appropriate measures. Argentina's commitment to those goals can be depended on.

The President (spoke in French): Prime Minister Yatsenyuk has requested the floor to make a further statement. I give him the floor.

Mr. Yatsenyuk (Ukraine): Mr. President, let me thank you and the Council members for your unconditional support of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of my country. This is really great, and I will deliver the message to the people of Ukraine that all, except one, supported the independence and territorial integrity of my country. We still believe that we can find a peaceful solution. My Government is committed to executing all international obligations. We adhere to all bilateral and multilateral treaties that Ukraine has signed and ratified.

Crimea was, is and will be an integral part of Ukraine. We will never recognize any kind of makeshift, artificial and falsified so-called referendum. We are ready to hold a nationwide dialogue in order to increase the powers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in the Ukrainian Parliament through constitutional means and tools. We will protect and defend every minority in my country. We stick to the principle of the Ukrainian Constitution that says that, except for the Ukrainian language, the only other language indicated in article 10 of the Ukrainian Constitution is the Russian one. We will protect every religion of every one who is a Ukrainian citizen. And we want to be very clear in stating that this Government is ready for an open dialogue.

We extended our hand to Russia, but in return we got the barrel of a gun. But we still believe that Russia is ready to negotiate and to tackle this dramatic conflict — not only in our bilateral relations, but in the whole of Europe — by peaceful means. What we are asking for is the truth. History will judge us. We have a chance to make history. We will do whatever we can in order to preserve peace and stability and in order to save my country.

The President (spoke in French): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.



Security Council

Distr.: General
14 March 2014

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 7135th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 14 March 2014, at 10 a.m.

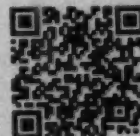
In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 14 March 2014, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 7135th meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

"The President invited Mr. Carl Alexandre, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries heard a briefing by Mr. Alexandre.

"Members of the Council, Mr. Alexandre and representatives of participating contributing countries had an exchange of views."





Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7136th meeting

Friday, 14 March 2014, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Lucas	(Luxembourg)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Stancanelli
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Russian Federation	Mr. Ilichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Libya

Note by the President of the Security Council (S/2014/106)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2014/131)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-26470 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

**Note by the President of the Security Council
(S/2014/106)**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the
United Nations Support Mission in Libya
(S/2014/131)**

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2014/188, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Chad, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/131, which contains the report of

the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/106, which contains the note by the President of the Security Council transmitting the report prepared in accordance with paragraph 14 (d) of resolution 2095 (2013) from the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011).

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2144 (2014).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.10 p.m.





Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7137th meeting

Friday, 14 March 2014, 3.10 p.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Lucas	(Luxembourg)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaite
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

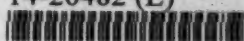
The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region (S/2014/153)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2014/157)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-26482 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region (S/2014/153)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2014/157)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mrs. Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mrs. Robinson, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from London.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/153, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/157, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kobler.

Mr. Kobler (*spoke in French*): I would like to start by congratulating Luxembourg on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March.

Two months ago, I briefed the Council on how the hopes that arose in 2013 had begun to materialize to the benefit of the Congolese people (see S/PV.7094). Today, I am here to seek the Council's support for another renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in order to bring the Mission to an end.

This meeting provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of MONUSCO, in particular its military component. We have achieved a great deal since 2013. The defeat of the militants of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), the joint operations against the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and securing the liberated areas are all contributing to the restoration of pockets of stability in order to gradually re-establish State authority in the eastern part of the country. We must now consolidate the gains achieved, while continuing to secure the areas where the armed groups are still active. That means preventing any backsliding by establishing safeguards. It is now up to us to robustly maintain the peace with conviction and perseverance.

(*spoke in English*)

There is a new momentum, and we must build on that. Our robust protection stance and the hard-won stability are the foundation upon which peace can be built. At the outset, let me describe two events that symbolize where we stand. The first is a good barometer of the progress made, and the second illustrates that much remains to be done to bring peace and security to conflict-affected areas.

The Amani music and dance festival for peace, initially scheduled for September 2013, eventually took place in February, thanks to the return of peace to Goma. The festival was a perfect illustration of how culture is capable of bringing people together in peace. More than 11,000 Congolese and Rwandans sang and danced together.

After the festival, I visited the so-called triangle of death in Katanga. I saw some of the 80 burned and

deserted villages. Mayi-Mayi Bakata Katanga groups have been systematically burning down villages and terrorizing the population. More than 400,000 people have been displaced so far. I saw children just separated from those armed groups, their eyes glazed and empty, their parents killed. They had no home to return to. I decided to reinforce our presence in Katanga. Still, Katanga, like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is a real paradox. It is very rich but also is troubled by extreme poverty.

Those two events illustrate the hope and the desperation, the chances and the challenges, the past and the future of the people of the Congo.

On the eve of the adoption of a new mandate, MONUSCO's overriding priorities remain the same. Security and protection will be our first priority, followed by the stabilization of conflict-affected areas and, thirdly, support for the reform processes and the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. MONUSCO cannot stay in the Congo forever. With the Council's help, we must speedily and consistently work together with our Congolese partners to bring about sustainable peace and start planning to phase out the Mission. The move of much of our civilian personnel to the east is a first step.

Thanks to intelligence gathered from different sources, including unarmed unmanned aviation systems, or the so-called unmanned aerial vehicles, ongoing sweeping operations have become better targeted against the FDLR. We have been very clear to them: surrender now or you will face the full Force Intervention Brigade. The Government, too, has stepped up its efforts to put an end to the threat that the FDLR poses to the population. I am confident that it will not stop until they have laid down their weapons. Together, we have continued our military operations against the FDLR.

After the ADF attacks in December, during which 21 civilians were killed, including 11 babies and young children, the Congolese army launched large-scale operations against ADF positions. With the support of the Force, the Congolese army destroyed the main ADF headquarters and cleared their main axes and routes and is now undertaking operations to flush out the remaining pockets of ADF resistance.

To bring our Mission to a good end, the Force, however, has to modernize. Fourteen years of a static

approach to the protection of civilians has proven insufficient. The Force needs to be robust, flexible, versatile, highly mobile and well trained — and fully able to deploy across the whole of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, holding key areas and operating deep in the most inaccessible areas. We need a more active presence in Ituri, South Kivu and Katanga.

If we are to enhance our ability to effectively deal with armed groups, the Force as a whole has to tirelessly pursue them. To that end, the Force is reducing part of its long-term static side and operating bases and is focusing on the use of mobile forces. The recent redeployment of Egyptian special forces to Katanga and the Uruguayan reaction to the attack of Cheka on Pinga in January demonstrated how a proactive approach can deter attacks on civilians and how all Force components and units can work together in a combined approach. Our motto says it all — One Mandate, One Mission, One Force.

The use of force is not a means in itself, however. It is guided by one important principle: politics first. We always strive for a peaceful and voluntary solution. The use of force alone will not achieve sustainable results if not embedded in a political framework. The military success over the M-23 will not be durable if the Nairobi Declarations are not implemented and the ex-combatants now in Uganda and Rwanda not speedily integrated into society. I welcome the recently adopted amnesty law, which rightly precludes perpetrators of gross human rights violations.

However, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo needs to take concrete steps rapidly to ensure implementation of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Plan. I urge both the international community and the Government to find solutions as to the structure and financing of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. I cannot overestimate the importance of adequate civilian follow-up actions; without them, the military gains will prove to be ephemeral. Given that we cannot tolerate any rollback or undermining of what has been achieved so far, a failure to rapidly implement the DDR Plan would be a serious setback. We cannot allow that to happen.

Since my last briefing to the Security Council, sexual violence against young girls and women has continued to be a problem. The Mission maintains zero tolerance

for sexual terrorism, and MONUSCO, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, will publish a thematic report on the fight against impunity for sexual violence in the coming days. We remain engaged in fighting impunity. The trial of those suspected of involvement in the Minova case resumed after interruption. The military court has so far heard testimony from 60 victims of rape and other human rights violations. In support of the Congolese military justice, MONUSCO continued to provide technical and logistical support.

There is also zero tolerance for recruiting child soldiers. Since mid-December, 268 children have been removed from the ranks of armed groups that surrendered to the Congolese army. The youngest was a boy of 10 years of age.

Our second priority — the stabilization of freed areas — should lead to the restoration of State authority. The concept of “islands of stability” was a direct answer to quickly embed State authority in post-conflict territories. In my last briefing, I could not report that children were going to school or that the administration was functioning in areas liberated from the M-23. Now I can.

I am pleased to report that in Kiwanja Rutshuru the advances have been quite impressive. Police units have been deployed, supported by the United Nations police with tents, rations and fuel. The territorial administrator and civil servants have returned, and MONUSCO and the country team are developing projects to rehabilitate police, justice and administrative buildings. The prison of Rutshuru has reopened, and its personnel were trained by MONUSCO.

Ownership is crucial. That is why I am glad that the North Kivu authorities identified seven additional pilot projects to turn into islands of stability. But, despite the progress, daunting difficulties remain to be dealt with before we can speak of delivery of full basic public services to people in the region. Although hampered by poor logistics and irregular payment of salary to civil servants, the local Government needs to be practical and focus on what can make a difference to the people.

To better support the Government where it is most needed, the Mission is undergoing a transformation into a field mission. We move to the east. Two thirds of all substantive staff in Kinshasa are being deployed to reinforce existing field offices in support of our operations in the east. We have established a permanent

civilian presence in Kiwanja, and that will be replicated in other areas. MONUSCO moves nearer to the very people it means to assist. The reconfiguration is not meant to prolong MONUSCO's stay in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On the contrary, it is the first step to an inevitable exit.

Our third priority is encouraging the implementation of key reforms in the context of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Continued robust military operations by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO, followed by stabilization efforts, need to be accompanied by consistent reform efforts on the part of the Government.

In support of the Government's reform plans, I have set up a coordination group at the ambassadorial level in Kinshasa aimed at harmonization of the positions of the donor community. That coordination group looks at four areas of overarching concern for the United Nations and international partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — DDR, elections, security sector reform (SSR) and stabilization. Our messages are clear. DDR of former fighters has to happen now. Preparations for the elections have to start now. Concrete progress on SSR has to be delivered now.

I strongly encourage the Government to accelerate implementation of key reforms, and I urge donors to assist in financing those reforms. I am particularly concerned by the slow pace of security sector reform despite President Kabila's emphasis in his address to the nation on 23 October 2013 that it was the priority of priorities. We need the Congolese army's rapid reaction force to ultimately take over from the Force Intervention Brigade. Early advances in police reform and justice reform have also suffered a setback because of insufficient budgetary provisions. In the long term, that prevents us from addressing impunity and poor governance.

On the electoral front, the Independent National Electoral Commission presented the National Assembly with a draft road map calling for local, urban and municipal elections in early 2015. It is important that its adoption be conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner. Through our good offices we will continue to promote an inclusive dialogue with a view to creating an environment conducive to the holding of credible elections. Respect for the constitutional provisions regarding the elections, in terms of both procedure and calendar, must be upheld.

I appeal to the international community to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo on its path to democratic rule. The Council's support is crucial to safeguarding proper democratic principles. Its support is crucial to guaranteeing a vote for every Congolese. Its support is crucial to avoid the errors of the past. I also call upon the opposition to participate constructively, and I urge all political parties to sign the Code of Conduct.

I remain concerned, however, by recent political developments that prevent all political forces from freely moving and campaigning. I therefore urge the Government to respect fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech, expression and assembly, and extend them to all political forces, as provided for by the Congolese Constitution. I have instituted an electoral incidents task force to closely monitor the situation; it will report regularly.

On 24 February, we celebrated the first anniversary of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mary Robinson, with whom I continue to enjoy an excellent relationship, will go further into detail on the implementation of the national commitments.

After decades of conflict between neighbouring countries, contacts at all levels of the region's Governments indicate a new dynamic in the region. Mutual trust is fragile. Confidence-building takes time. Still, investment in crossborder transport infrastructure and economic cooperation will pave the way to regional prosperity.

First, I wish to thank the donor community for its financial contribution in helping us upgrade the Goma airport. Turning Goma into an economic hub will boost economic development and foster regional cooperation. I leave it to Special Envoy Mary Robinson to elaborate on the current initiatives to promote private entrepreneurship.

Secondly, the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be a source of prosperity, not poverty. I welcome the Government's intention to increase public revenues from natural resources. The legalization and regulation of the exportation and exploitation of minerals is addressing the root causes of the conflict.

Despite many difficulties, I sense a spirit of dynamism and hope. That is certainly not a guarantee

for success. That spirit, however, places an obligation for all of us in MONUSCO and in the country team to grasp the opportunity — maybe for the first time in many years — to reach a durable solution.

However, peace has a price tag. MONUSCO will reduce its budget. Over 300 posts will be cut. I am the first to criticize inefficiencies, reduce duplication, fine-tune management structures. Solid work, however, needs solid resources.

(spoke in French)

On the eve of the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate, we look to the future hopefully but realistically. I am confident that when the songs of the Congolese youth have replaced the sound of bullets, prosperity will be around the corner.

I would like to thank all of the United Nations staff for their daily commitment, in increasingly difficult circumstances, to working for a lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. More specifically, on the twelfth anniversary of Radio Okapi, allow me to express my enormous gratitude to the station's entire staff for their work and commitment. Radio Okapi is a radio station unlike any other. It has become part of daily life for the Congolese and is often their only source of information. Through the airwaves it helps to unify Congolese society.

I thank you, Madam President, and the members of the Security Council once again for your support.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I thank Mr. Kobler for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Robinson.

Mrs. Robinson: Thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council today from London and for the strong support the Council has given to efforts to bring durable peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

One year after the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, I remain convinced that it offers the best prospects and hope for security and for the improvement of the living conditions of the people in the region, who continue to bear the brunt of armed violence and aggression. Indeed, in the last year, hope has risen with the defeat of the rebel Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) followed by the conclusion of the Kampala Dialogue Declarations between the parties.

The Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), supported by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and its Force Intervention Brigade, are pursuing its efforts to rid the east of the country of the armed groups.

Furthermore, despite numerous challenges, hope for dialogue, trust and regional cooperation — the basis for peace and security — have appeared stronger in the past year. By collaborating on the regional benchmarks and building consensus on the plan of action for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, countries of the Great Lakes region have been able to show the possibilities of the framework of hope, and that durable peace and security for the region can be within grasp if the current momentum is sustained. I should, however, stress that the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region remains quite precarious and will require actions at several levels to sustain the current momentum and to achieve meaningful results.

A good way to sustain the current momentum and to ensure that the framework of hope delivers on its promises is to align international actions with emerging positive regional dynamics that reinforce the objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Angola's current chairmanship of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) offers a good opportunity and holds significant prospects for advancing the cause of peace and stability in the region.

At the latest Summit of the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, held in Luanda in January, President Dos Santos shared a vision for his tenure that complements the objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. The President initiated a political dialogue with Presidents Kagame, Kabila, Museveni and Zuma on illegal armed groups such as the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), during which they agreed on a plan to tackle the sources of insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. It was agreed, *inter alia*, that the military chiefs of staff of the five countries involved in the dialogue would come together and examine ways to support the plans of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to address the FDLR.

I believe that a regional plan borne out of dialogue holds good prospects, and I am strongly encouraging the political leadership of President Dos Santos to ensure coherence and to be a rallying point for the coordination of efforts in the region. My several meetings with President Dos Santos have been very encouraging, and I firmly believe that much progress can be achieved by Angola's leadership of the ICGLR in the next two years.

As I was saying earlier, the FARDC, supported by MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade, are making significant progress in their operations against the ADF. Operations have now started against the FDLR, as the Council has heard. Those are indeed important developments. However, I believe they should take into account the regional plan and the steps agreed in Luanda and align efforts for optimum results. It is my sincere hope that robust operations against FDLR elements who refuse to surrender will be vigorously sustained and concluded speedily. Those who surrender and who have not been involved in the genocide or other serious crimes should have the option to return to Rwanda in dignity through the established processes.

President Kabila's commitments in Luanda to address the FDLR threat in a comprehensive manner by the end of the year and his Government's ultimatum on 24 February to the FDLR, as well as the recent actions by the FARDC, supported by MONUSCO and the Force Intervention Brigade, are very encouraging signs. Tackling the FDLR presence in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should indeed go a long way to address Rwanda's concerns and ease tensions in the region. It would form the building blocks for trust and mutual confidence, with multiplier effects to facilitate regional economic and social cooperation. It would also facilitate efforts for the full restoration of State authority in the Kivu regions of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As we move into the second year of implementation, it is equally important that we fast-track the social and economic aspects of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. As I have always said, peace cannot take root without tangible evidence on the ground that jobs and businesses are able to flourish, with people feeling a difference in their lives.

Following the endorsement by the regional oversight mechanism of the convening of a private sector investment conference for the region, I have been

working, together with my team, with the ICGLR, the African Union (AU), the European Union, the World Bank, United Nations agencies and with a number of Member States to hold the conference before the end of this year. The conference will promote a shared understanding of the role of the private sector in advancing the economic pillar of the Framework, inspire actionable policy recommendations for the consideration of decision makers and create a venue for public and private stakeholders of the signatory countries to identify business and investment opportunities. It will also create a space for business leaders to forge relationships, expand their professional networks and share experiences.

My Office will convene the conference jointly with the ICGLR, the Southern African Development Community and the African Union, in close consultation with other United Nations agencies, countries of the region and with the support of the bilateral and multilateral institutions.

The social and economic pillars of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework also recorded some achievements with the establishment of the Women's Platform for the Framework, which I had the privilege to help launch on 28 January in Addis Ababa, during the AU summit. The ICGLR opened the regional training facility on sexual and gender-based violence in Kampala, on 16 February, for the training of security personnel in the region. Collaboration is ongoing with the ICGLR and other partners to operationalize those important mechanisms.

My recent interactions with civil society organizations from across the region — which took place in Addis Ababa on the margins of the African Union January Summit and in follow-up meetings, both in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and lately in The Hague, during the meeting of the International Contact Group — have clearly revealed the readiness of that critical group to play an active role in the implementation of the Framework. I look to Council members to lend their support to all of those initiatives, which would directly impact the lives of the people of the region.

Related progress has been achieved at national level, as well since the endorsement of the plan of action for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I commend President Kabila and the Government of the Democratic Republic

of the Congo for promulgating the amnesty law, in line with the Kampala Dialogue Declarations, which formally ended the conflict with the M-23. I think we must all recognize that it was not an easy step for a Government to take and that it was a sign of leadership that the Government was determined that it had to be part of the process.

The amnesty, as we know, will not be extended to those responsible for serious crimes and human rights violations. However, more actions are required to follow up, particularly on the repatriation from Uganda and Rwanda of former M-23 combatants and the beginning of an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process for eligible members.

During my recent visit in the region, I raised the issue of the former M-23 combatants with the relevant authorities. I am glad that some progress is being made in relation to DDR and that there are active discussions with international partners. But this is a critical issue on which more progress is needed, as my colleague and friend Martin Kobler has emphasized.

I continue to be engaged with Ugandan Minister of Defence Kiyonga, the ICGLR and the national oversight mechanism in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fast track the establishment of the follow-up mechanism, as agreed under the Kampala Dialogue Declarations.

Meanwhile, several critical issues remain that require urgent attention. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, more needs to be done to consolidate State authority throughout the country, reform the security sector — again, I agree with Martin Kobler that this has to be more of a priority, particularly with regard to the army — and promote good governance, reconciliation, tolerance and democratization. While efforts are ongoing to align various national plans with the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, for optimal results the Democratic Republic of the Congo national oversight mechanism needs to be further strengthened to efficiently carry out its mandate. During my recent visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I was pleased to learn from both Prime Minister Matata Ponyo Mapon and the Coordinator of the national oversight mechanism, François Mwamba, that support to the mechanism and coordination with the Government was improving.

Despite the modest progress recorded in the past year, we still have a long way to go to achieve

the objectives of the Framework. The security and humanitarian situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains fragile. I would say it remains unacceptable, because there is still not the security needed by women and their families in particular. We must therefore find the means and courage to address all underlying causes of conflicts, promote reconciliation and tackle the obstacles that impede the voluntary return of refugees in safety and in dignity. Furthermore, efforts should be geared towards working with the region to build trust, without which economic and social cooperation cannot thrive.

While efforts should remain focused on stabilizing the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we must equally be mindful of the impact of developments in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, also signatories to the Framework and neighbours to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I am very concerned — as I know members of the Council are — about continuing reports of gross violations of human rights in those countries and the prevailing security situation.

Recently, at a breakfast in Kinshasa on 3 March, I met Catherine Samba-Panza, interim President of the Central African Republic. We spoke at length. She informed me of the urgent need for additional capacity to be provided by the United Nations to support peacekeeping in her country and requested that I bring this dire need to the attention of members of the Council today.

In addition, and in a way that I think requires our attention, the growing tensions in another signatory country, Burundi, are also quite worrisome. I will travel to Bujumbura on 19 March to engage with the Government and stakeholders, in close coordination with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga.

Before travelling to Burundi, I will be in Goma, on 18 March, one year to the day from when my mandate started, for an announcement and press conference about the “peace one day”, 21 September, which will be celebrated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo this year. It will be an opportunity for the world to take stock, in a sense, of both the progress and the needs in that country.

In the coming months, certain courses of actions will be critical if further meaningful progress is to be achieved in the implementation of the Framework. At

the national level, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo needs to quickly implement the provisions of the Kampala Dialogue Declarations, including the administrative and technical steps to facilitate the repatriation of the almost 2,000 former M-23 combatants who fled to Rwanda and Uganda last year. Further delay in that process could be costly to peace and regional stability.

The national DDR programme also needs to gain immediate traction. It remains stalled due to the lack of an agreed approach and an agreed funding plan with international partners. Concrete actions in fair and independent courts would also be required against those who have committed serious violations of human rights and international crimes. I welcome the proposal for the establishment of mixed courts.

While it is important to hold Member States accountable for the implementation of their commitments and to provide support in that regard, we must not fail to be guided by the fact that achieving peace and stability in the region will be an incremental process. The region will therefore require time, as well as dedicated support, to achieve the objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. More important, international engagements and messaging to Member States must be strong, constant, well coordinated and coherent to achieve the desired results.

Despite the other pressures on members of the Council — and I know they are very real — I would plead for the continuation of the strong support that members have shown for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

In the coming months, with the kind support of the Council, I intend to continue my engagements with President Dos Santos and Foreign Minister Chikoti to seek further collaboration in the political dialogue among leaders of the region on sensitive issues. It is my sincere hope that, beginning with the ongoing dialogue on illegal armed groups, the process will develop to include dialogue on other critical issues that would otherwise severely limit the achievement of the goals of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I shall also continue my efforts with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and will support the ICGLR secretariat's efforts to ensure the effective implementation and follow-up of the Kampala Dialogue Declarations.

Of course, I will continue to work closely with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kobler, with whom, as he has also said, I have an excellent relationship. We work very closely together, and I think that is a strength. We both understand the need to complement each other, but also to work very closely together.

I will also work increasingly with civil society, including women's groups, and with international partners, including the team of envoys, with whom I also have an excellent relationship, to assist the Government in accelerating the implementation of key national reforms, including security sector reform, the consolidation of State authority throughout the country, national reconciliation and democratization, particularly as we approach the next election cycle.

Let me conclude with a personal word regarding a special memorial event that is imminent — the twentieth anniversary of the genocide that occurred in Rwanda. As I said to the Council during my first briefing as Special Envoy, in May 2013 (see S/PV.6960), I recall vividly my first visit to Rwanda after that tragic event, and the images of the atrocities remain indelible in my mind. As we commemorate the genocide, I would like to encourage all of us to reflect deeply on the lessons learned from the past work together, to ensure that the succeeding years — the next 20 years and well beyond — in the Great Lakes region of Africa will be characterized by tolerance, peace, stability and development.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mrs. Robinson for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the member of the Council who wishes to make a statement.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kobler and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Robinson for taking the time to brief us today on the reports of the Secretary-General (S/2014/157 and S/204/153, respectively) and the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

As the Secretary-General's reports highlight, despite the positive developments of late 2013, it is clear that the momentum has slowed, with limited progress on both the political and military fronts. We are looking at a volatile security situation in not only the east, but

throughout the country. Negative forces are still on the rampage, killing and maiming, raping young girls and women, recruiting children and displacing thousands of civilians.

The seriousness and scale of the killings and violations that continue in Katanga and in areas formerly occupied by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) in North Kivu are deeply troubling. A major reason for that is the culture of impunity that continues to prevail throughout the country. All perpetrators — whether from the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), which has committed 18 per cent of crimes reported in 2013, or any other armed group — must be brought to justice and held accountable for their crimes.

There is no doubt that the next few months will be critical. We need to take a serious look at how resolution 2098 (2013) is being implemented, especially in the neutralization of negative armed groups, the consolidation of the peace process and the protection of civilians in liberated areas.

We welcome mention in the reports presented by the briefers of the fact that some members of some armed groups have peacefully surrendered, and indeed we applaud the FARDC, supported by MONUSCO, for attacking and destroying a number of Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) camps. The resumption of the Minova trial is another positive development, and we look forward to a conclusive prosecution that can set a precedent for future cases. The recently promulgated amnesty law, adopted as per the Kampala Declarations, is also a positive step in national reconciliation, but one that will require measurable actions. We urge MONUSCO and the international community to closely monitor its implementation.

However, those positive developments should not obscure the fact that one of the oldest armed groups remains at large. As always, for the past 20 years, the problem that we have is the posture of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations peacekeepers, currently MONUSCO, towards the threat posed by the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), the genocidal forces responsible for the genocide against the Tutsi. Throughout the last quarter of 2013, we were told that the FDLR were next on the list of negative forces to be eliminated. What therefore happened between when that promise was made and the next briefing? No one knows. There is no accountability.

At our most recent meeting on MONUSCO, the military operation plan presented to the Security Council was that the FARDC was to go after the ADF. They did so, and we applaud them. Following that, we were told that MONUSCO was to focus its resources on the FDLR. Nothing happened. Only a week or two before this briefing did we hear the news that there was a military operation against the FDLR.

The threat of the FDLR persists, despite the mandate of MONUSCO, which was given extra offensive capabilities after the deployment of the Intervention Brigade, and MONUSCO's failure to commit to fighting that force remains evident.

Once again, it is high time we see a change of attitude on the part of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo towards the FDLR. Rwanda has for several years expressed legitimate concerns about the lack of political will of that Government to tackle the threat of the FDLR. Various Security Council reports have detailed evidence of all kinds of support given to the FDLR by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda has provided even more.

The continuous excuses given by MONUSCO, again and again, when it comes to conducting military operations against the FDLR are disturbing. While it is not making excuses about the lack of intelligence — which Rwanda has shared with MONUSCO — it is engaged in propaganda operations to hoodwink the Security Council about military operations with the FARDC against the FDLR. On 9 March 2014, the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade, jointly with the FARDC, raided the FDLR's illegal road block along the Kalengera-Tongo road. Reliable information revealed that Colonel Ramadan, the acting FARDC commander of the eighth military region, leaked information of the impending Brigade attack on the FDLR, thus undermining the operation.

Let me just add that it is not only Rwanda expressing frustration over inaction against negative forces. The countries of the region and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) have expressed frustration over the lack of political will by MONUSCO to address the threats of armed groups in the Great Lakes region.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has been host to domestic and foreign armed groups, particularly the M-23, the FDLR and the Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda. As a

result, the ICGLR came up with detailed mechanisms to address the situation, including political and military measures. Some of those mechanisms have been taken over by the United Nations, including the Intervention Brigade under MONUSCO — and yet the major threat posed by the FDLR has not been tackled. That was again the subject of the ICGLR Summit held in Luanda on 15 January 2014, where the chiefs of defence staffs of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa were again tasked with assessing the situation and coming up with new mechanisms to eradicate the FDLR.

On the current situation regarding the FDLR, let me briefly share some updates with the Council on FDLR activities. The FDLR's strength is estimated at 3,640, with infantry and integral weapons. That strength is likely to increase, due to ongoing recruitment and training. Currently, the FDLR is engaged in the following activities.

First, it is enhancing collaboration with FARDC, especially at the operational level. That has enabled the FDLR to refit, re-arm, share intelligence and have freedom of action and free passage for infiltration and terror attacks in Rwanda. From July 2013 to date, 42 FDLR infiltrators and terror elements have been arrested and are undergoing prosecution in Rwandan courts.

Secondly, on the mobilization, recruitment, training and establishment of terror networks in Rwanda, those activities are facilitated by provision of safe passage and logistics by the FARDC.

Thirdly, the recent claim by MONUSCO that the FDLR is located in populated areas is just a sheer lie. Instead, the outfit has most of its units in Virunga National Park, in North Kivu province. It also maintains its dispositions in unpopulated areas of Mwenga and Uvira territories in South Kivu, involved in illegal mining and taxation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to sustain the war effort.

I would also like to discuss a different issue, M-23 ex-combatants. While the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/157) suggests that consultations on the unresolved issue of the ex-combatants in Rwanda are ongoing, we remind the Council that those combatants have been in Rwanda since March 2013 — almost a year. The Government of Rwanda has done everything required by international law to contain that group,

including relocating them to Ngoma district in Eastern Province, approximately 250 kilometres from the Democratic Republic of the Congo border. But despite our repeated calls for the international community to assume responsibility, not much has been done. Some contacts were initiated in December, but they were not really that much.

I will not dwell much on the report on the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (S/2014/153), since the implementation of the Framework will be discussed on 27 March in Nairobi.

As we have said previously, next month marks the twentieth commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi. There could be no greater symbol of justice for its victims than the defeat and eradication of the FDLR once and for all. It is a virulent genocidal force that has been allowed to terrorize the region for the past two decades.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Madam President, I would like to express how honoured we are to see you presiding over the Security Council today. You represent Luxembourg, a country with which the Democratic Republic of the Congo enjoys a long relationship marked by mutual esteem and respect. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, the representative of Lithuania, and to congratulate her for the commitment and skill with which she headed the Council during the past month.

I should also like to convey to the Security Council the gratitude of the people and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the United Nations efforts to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country and to ensure its peace and stability.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whose interest in working to consolidate peace in my country led to his personal involvement in bringing together the leaders of the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa for the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. That agreement was concluded in Addis Ababa on 24 February 2013.

My delegation has taken note of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2014/153), as well as the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2014/157), which the Council is currently discussing.

My delegation is pleased to note that the two reports both acknowledge the efforts of my country in the implementation of its commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. For the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the implementation of the Framework — which for the first time lays the foundations for sustainable peace in the east of the country and for peaceful cohabitation between it and its neighbours, especially those of the east — should be emphasized. That Framework and resolution 2098 (2013), which reinforces the Framework, represent major innovations, both in stemming the crisis that has been rampant in the Great Lakes region since the mid-1990s and in the traditional United Nations peacekeeping doctrine. For the long-suffering people of the region, the Framework and the resolution are striking proof of the determination of the international community to help find a definitive solution to the instability that has lasted far too long and has cost my country greatly.

From that perspective, my delegation would like to endorse the appeal launched by the Heads of State and Government of the signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework at the high-level meeting of the regional oversight mechanism, which took place in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2014, in which they called upon the countries of the region to cooperate and undertake necessary measures to neutralize armed groups; to combat impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity, conflict-related sexual violence and other gross violations of human rights; and to undertake appropriate actions against those persons subject to the United Nations sanctions regime.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is determined to assume its share of responsibility so that peace and concord return to the region. To that effect, as soon as the Framework was signed, the Congolese Government undertook to fulfil its obligations. It is pursuing its efforts to conclude security sector reform. Reforming the structures and staffs of the army, the security services and the police; recruiting Congolese youth from all provinces of the country into the defence

forces; reopening military academies; and training, with help from bilateral partners, of special forces and support units, with the primary goal of making operational the rapid-reaction force — all those concrete actions have already begun and the Government will bolster them so as to make the defence of our territory more effective and to better guarantee the authority of the State.

As stressed by the Secretary-General in his two reports, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, promulgated on 11 February 2014 the law on amnesty for rebellion, war and political crimes committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 18 February 2006 and 20 December 2013.

One month ago, after his statement before the Lower Chamber of Parliament, the Chair of the Independent National Electoral Commission met with political parties and groups. That meeting, which marked the launch of the 2014-2016 electoral cycle, led to the unanimous adoption of the new Code of Conduct for political parties and candidates. As of 10 February, the Code had been signed by 233 political parties.

Within the framework of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, I wish to recall that on 26 December 2013 the Council of Ministers adopted the third national plan for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The identification of combatants from armed groups in North Kivu, regrouped into the Bweremana and Kanyaruchinya sites, has been completed. Those who are eligible under the plan will be consistently evacuated to triage centres for DDR operations. Meanwhile, the evacuation to the Kitona triage centre of Bakata-Katanga ex-combatants who fulfil the conditions continues.

Furthermore, as my country's President announced in his address to the nation on 31 December, the decentralization process will soon start with the establishment of the new Government, against the background of the gradual establishment of new provinces, the devolution of central Government financial services to the provinces and the establishment of the national stabilization fund.

The Council will recall that, after the defeat of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), the President, the Supreme Commander of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, ordered the

forcible disarmament of all national and foreign armed groups still active throughout the country who refused to respond to the offer of voluntary disarmament.

In the area of operations, the pursuit of rebels who rejected the DDR programme began with the launch of the campaign to restore peace to the east by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) on 16 January. Operations are progressing satisfactorily against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in North Kivu and in the southern part of that province, and against the Rwandese rebels of the FDLR in South Kivu.

In that vein, Mr. Martin Kobler recently welcomed the FARDC operations against the FDLR and the armed groups and announced the support and close engagement of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) with the Congolese army to neutralize the FDLR. As the spokesperson of the Government said during a press conference on 7 March, Mr. Kobler has also requested, in a communiqué to the FDLR rebels, that they immediately stop supporting their leaders who are being prosecuted, or expect to be forcibly disarmed.

Along those same lines — to take up the idea expressed on 26 February before the American Senate by the Special Envoy of the United States of America for the Great Lakes Region — if the countries sheltering the defeated elements of the M-23 fail to hand them over to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and international justice, they will have the great responsibility, in line with the provisions of the Framework, to ensure that those individuals do not resume their hostile activities.

With regard to the support of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the FDLR, which the Ambassador of Rwanda has just spoken of, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, during a previous Council meeting (see S/PV.7107), made the Council aware of the Government's efforts in the pursuit it had already conducted with the Government of Rwanda. Subsequently, those efforts were continued by my Government alone, and then with the help of MONUSCO. As we have already told the Council, those efforts were interrupted after the M-23 rebellion.

As I have just said, now that the M-23 rebellion has been put down, it was the Democratic Republic of the Congo that asked the Council to establish the Intervention Brigade. The Brigade was established at

the request of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and on it the Council conferred the mandate to eradicate all the opposition forces in the region, as well as the various armed groups. That task — as I have said, and Mr. Kobler is present — has begun.

As we have always said, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not interested in supporting the FDLR. The FDLR has been present in Rwanda since the Rwandan genocide. The Council knows well that the FDLR did not come to the Democratic Republic of the Congo at our country's request. It was because the Democratic Republic of the Congo wanted to be hospitable by welcoming the Rwandan people who were fleeing the genocide. That is how those responsible for the genocide came to the country.

Today the problem has become a problem of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is constantly having to deal with it. It is certainly the Democratic Republic of the Congo that is suffering because the FDLR, since coming to our country, has been killing the Congolese. Congolese women are being raped. Congolese villages are being burned. We are the ones suffering from the FDLR. Unless one is cynical, can one believe that a Government whose people are suffering from such acts can support those criminals? No, one cannot. I said that the last time to the Ambassador of Rwanda, who, as the Council, knows, continues to talk about the genocide, soon to be commemorated. But he should not be cynical about the Congolese people, who are suffering.

In the eastern part of my country, we have lost more than 6 million people, who have died. As I said here last time, if the Democratic Republic of the Congo was not involved in the Rwandan genocide, could Rwanda not help us regarding the 6 million people who have died in the east? One should not make fun of the Congolese people because the Congolese Government has no reason to support the FDLR. We have no interest in supporting it.

Mr. Kobler works in the region. He can attest to that. Yesterday, as the Council knows, when the experts presented the report here, what were the accusations of the Rwandan representative? In condemning the experts' report he was also criticizing MONUSCO. He said that MONUSCO was also cooperating with the FDLR. I believe that to be in bad faith, because Rwanda supports that element, which allows it to carry

on destabilizing the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is a pretext, and he knows that today, if the Council removes that pretext there will no longer be any reason to be in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to carry out such activities there. I therefore appeal to the international community and all Security Council members to help us to resolve the situation, in which my country is truly innocent. We cannot tolerate being accused here without grounds.

The renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be undertaken in the spirit of paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of resolution 2098 (2013), of 28 March 2013, by which the Security Council decided to extend and complete, through the Force Intervention Brigade, the mission it had been given to neutralize armed groups, as set out sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph 12 of the resolution, which would allow it to reduce the threat posed by armed groups to State authority and civilian security in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and prepare the way for stabilization activities.

To that end, I congratulate MONUSCO, its Intervention Brigade and the countries contributing troops to it for the quality of the work done throughout the first term now coming to a close. The work of the Intervention Brigade, working side by side with the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo led to the defeat of M-23, was very much appreciated by the Congolese people.

For my Government, the second mandate of the Intervention Brigade, which will soon begin, should bring success to the efforts already undertaken to restore peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and throughout the Great Lakes region. In the words of President Kabila Kabange on the occasion of the signing of the Framework Agreement,

"It is time, high time, that we guarantee our people the right to life and sustained enjoyment of the most precious good which they expect from their leaders, namely, peace — not the peace of bayonets, and still less the peace of cemeteries, whose essence is artificial and ephemeral, but the peace that arises from the recognition of a shared destiny, the will to live together and responsibly address problems, and respect for rules and principles, especially those that we have just subscribed again by signing the Framework agreement.

"That peace is admittedly demanding, but it is the only one able to withstand the ravages of time and the vagaries of history. It is not possible without the sincerity of the actors, and it can only be built in the context of truth. The truth is that, though it has been repeatedly assaulted, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country that loves peace, has always respected the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all its neighbours. And it always will be thus."

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the presence among us of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mr. Martin Kobler, and thank him for the dynamism that he has impressed upon MONUSCO's activities in the field of operations. I also wish to express our gratitude to Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, for her commitment and efforts towards restoring a lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and throughout the Great Lakes region.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Rwanda has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): I will not waste your time, Madam President. I have just a small rectification to make here. You will understand why, Madam. I am Rwandan. I would not say it otherwise.

I would like to tell my dear colleague, the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that we are not going to celebrate the Rwandan genocide. I know that ours is not the language of Molière

and Voltaire, but what we are going to do on 7 April is commemorate the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi in Rwanda. I wanted to make that rectification. We are not going to celebrate. That is all.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Democratic Republic of the Congo has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

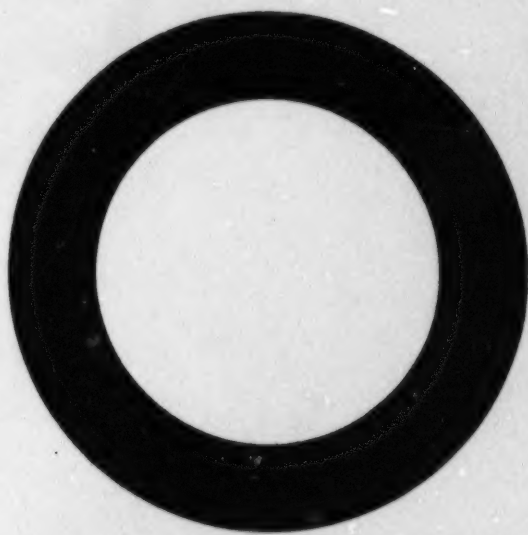
Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of Congo) (*spoke in French*): I appreciate the rectification that the representative of Rwanda has just made. It is a commemoration in which we will all participate, because what his country experienced was sad and we cannot accept it.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say we do not have a culture of impunity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I think that what we say at this table deserves a minimum of respect because it is said in the name of the authorities of our countries. I had already said it last time — the Ambassador of Rwanda should learn to respect other countries, to respect us, to respect the authorities of my country.

We will therefore no longer accept that type of language. As I just said, as a member of the Security Council, he should not say or do certain things. He has no right to that. In response to everything he just said, which offends my country, I invite him to have respect for my country and for the authorities of my country.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.





Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7138th meeting

Saturday, 15 March 2014, 11 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Lucas	(Luxembourg)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaite
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-26614 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2014/189, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I shall now give the floor to the member of the Council who wishes to make a statement before the voting.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Many times, we have put forth in this Chamber the essence of the Russian position regarding the cause and development of the internal crisis in Ukraine. That general context is important to understanding our view of the draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2014/189) for the Council's vote today.

It is a secret to no one that the Russian Federation will vote against the draft resolution. We cannot go along with its basic assumption, which is to declare

illegal the planned referendum of 16 March whereby the people of the Crimean republic will themselves determine their future.

The philosophy of the sponsors of the draft resolution runs counter to one of basic principles of international law, the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, enshrined in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. That principle is confirmed in the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and in a number of other decisions of the General Assembly, as well as the Helsinki Final Act of 1975.

We do not dispute the principle of the territorial integrity of States. It is indeed very important. It is also understandable that the enjoyment of the right to self-determination involving separation from an existing State is an extraordinary measure, applied when further coexistence within a single State becomes impossible. Moreover, as practice has demonstrated, in the majority of cases, the realization of peoples' right to self-determination is achieved without the agreement of the central authorities of the State.

With respect to Crimea, that case resulted from a legal vacuum generated by an unconstitutional armed coup d'état carried out in Kyiv by radical nationalists in February, as well as by their direct threats to impose their order throughout Ukraine.

It should also be noted that generally agreed principles of international law are closely interlinked and that each should be considered in the light of the others, the relevant political context and historic specificities. The political, legal and historic backdrop of the events of today in Ukraine is extremely complicated. In that context, it is useful to recall that up until 1954, Crimea formed part of the Russian Federation. It was given to Ukraine in violation of the norms of that time under Soviet law and without taking into account the views of the people of Crimea, who nevertheless remained within a single State — the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

When the Soviet Union fell, Crimea automatically became part of Ukraine. The view of the people of Crimea was once again ignored. After the fall of the Soviet Union, for more than 20 years Crimea attempted to exercise its right to self-determination.

In January 1991, a referendum was conducted in Crimea, resulting in the adoption of a law in Ukraine regarding the establishment of autonomous Crimea. In September 1991, the High Council of Crimea adopted a declaration on State sovereignty. In 1992, the constitution of Crimea was adopted, declaring Crimea an independent state within Ukraine. However, in 1995, through a decision of the Ukrainian authorities and the President of Ukraine, the constitution was annulled, without the agreement of the Crimean people.

We set out a number of other arguments in favour of the legality of the Crimean referendum at the Council meeting on 13 March (see S/PV.7134).

In conclusion, we wish to confirm that we will respect the will of the Crimean people during the referendum of 16 March.

The President (spoke in French): I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

Against:

Russian Federation

Abstention:

China

The President (spoke in French): There were 13 votes in favour, 1 vote against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Ms. Power (United States of America): The United States deeply appreciates the support from our colleagues around the table and from the many States that have called for a peaceful end to the crisis in Ukraine. This is, however, a sad and remarkable moment. It is the seventh time that the Security Council has convened to discuss the urgent crisis in Ukraine. The Council is meeting on Ukraine because it is the job of this body to stand up for peace and to defend those in danger.

We have heard a lot, each time that the Security Council has met, about the echoes and relevance of history. We have heard, for example, about the pleas of the brave democrats of Hungary in 1956 and about the dark chill that dashed the dreams of Czechs in 1968. We still have the time and the collective power to ensure that the past does not become prologue. But history has lessons, for those of us who are willing to listen. Unfortunately, not everyone was willing to listen today.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Russian Federation has the power to veto a Security Council draft resolution. But it does not have the power to veto the truth. As we know, the word "truth" — or "pravda" — has a prominent place in the story of modern Russia. From the days of Lenin and Trotsky until the fall of the Berlin Wall, Pravda was the name of the house newspaper of the Soviet communist regime. But throughout that period, one could search in vain to find "pravda" in pravda.

Today one again searches in vain to find truth in the Russian position on Crimea, on Ukraine or on the proposed Security Council resolution (S/2014/189) considered and vetoed a few moments ago. The truth is that the draft resolution should not have been controversial. It was grounded in principles that provide the foundation for international stability and law, Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, the prohibition of the use of force to acquire territory and respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Member States. Those are principles that Russia agrees with and defends vigorously, all around the world; except, it seems, in circumstances that involve Russia.

The draft resolution broke no new legal or normative ground. It simply called on all parties to do what they had previously pledged through internationally binding agreements to do. It recalled specifically the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, in which Russia and other signatories reaffirmed their commitments themselves to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and to refrain from aggressive military action toward that country.

The draft resolution called on the Government of Ukraine to do what it had promised it would do: to protect the rights of all Ukrainians, including those belonging to minority groups.

Finally, the draft resolution noted that the planned Crimean referendum, scheduled for tomorrow, has no

legal validity and will have no legal effect on the status of Crimea.

From the beginning of the crisis, the Russian position has been at odds not only with the law, but also with the facts. Russia claimed that the rights of people inside Ukraine were under attack, but that claim had validity only in the parts of Ukraine where Russia and Russian military forces were exercising undue influence. Russia denied that it was intervening militarily, but Russian troops have helped to surround and occupy public buildings, shut down airports, obstruct transit points and prevent the entry into Ukraine of international observers and human rights monitors. Russian leadership has disclaimed any intention of trying to annex Crimea, then reversed itself and concocted a rationale for justifying just such an illegal act.

Russia claims that its intentions are peaceful, but Russian officials have shown little interest in United Nations, European and American efforts at diplomacy, including Secretary of State Kerry's efforts yesterday in London. Russia has refused Ukraine's outstretched hand while, as we speak, Russian armed forces are massing across Ukraine's eastern border. Two days ago, in this very Chamber, Ukraine's Prime Minister appealed to Russia to embrace peace (see S/PV.7134). Instead, Russia has rejected a draft resolution that had peace at its heart and law flowing through its veins.

The United States offered the draft resolution in a spirit of reconciliation, in the desire for peace, in keeping with the rule of law, in recognition of the facts and in fulfilment of the obligation of the Council to promote and preserve stability among nations. At the moment of decision, only one hand was raised to oppose those principles. Russia — isolated, alone and wrong — blocked the draft resolution's adoption, just as it has blocked Ukrainian ships and international observers. Russia put itself outside the international norms that we have painstakingly developed to serve as the bedrock foundation for peaceful relations between States.

The reason only one country voted against the draft resolution today is that the world believes that international borders are more than mere suggestions. The world believes that people within those internationally recognized borders have the right to chart their own future, free from intimidation. The world believes that the lawless pursuit of one's ambitions serves none of us.

Russia has used its veto as an accomplice to unlawful military incursion. That very veto was given nearly 70 years ago to countries that had led an epic fight against aggression. But in so doing, Russia cannot change the fact that moving forward in blatant defiance of the international rules of the road will have consequences, nor can it change Crimea's status. Crimea is part of Ukraine today. It will be part of Ukraine tomorrow. It will be part of Ukraine next week. It will be part of Ukraine unless and until its status is changed in accordance with Ukrainian and international law.

Russia prevented the adoption of a resolution today, but it cannot change the aspirations and destiny of the Ukrainian people, and it cannot deny the truth, displayed today, that there is overwhelming international opposition to its dangerous actions.

Mr. Araud (France) (spoke in French): It is with a sense of disbelief that we find ourselves here today — disbelief at the situation that developed before our eyes with the Russian Federation's determination to annex Crimea.

Nothing is lacking from those things that we hoped were relegated to the vaults of history: the military manoeuvres at the borders, the henchman who yesterday was no one and today has suddenly been designated President of the Crimea, the occupation denied against all evidence, the torrents of propaganda, and now the charade of a referendum that is not only illegal, rushed and without electoral campaigns but is reduced to a choice between two ways of saying yes. Crimeans will not even be able to express their will.

The violation of international law is so obvious at this point that one almost feels pity at seeing Russian diplomacy — so formalistic, so finicky in its respect for proprieties and its invocation of texts — struggling to find a legal basis for the coup. One day, they brandish an alleged letter from the Head of State who is on the run, and only an unsigned version of that letter is released, disappearing as quickly as it appeared. The next day, they recall the issue of Kosovo. Finally, after what was probably a feverish search through the archives, they even exhume a decolonization case from 1976: the question of Mayotte. They are trying so hard to use all available means in Moscow that they do not want to see that in the latter example, Russia having taken the opposite position from the one it is taking today, that shaky comparison — even if one accepts it — proves that Russia was wrong in 1976 or is wrong now, in 2014. It must choose.

I think, however, that my Russian colleague and I will find common ground in a key sentence from the speech of the Soviet Permanent Representative in 1976 on the question of Mayotte, who said:

"Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the integrity territory of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations." (*S/PV.1888, p. 8*).

In reality, nothing will come of those pathetic efforts — certainly not the basis for any legal reasoning. The vetoing of a text that is nothing more than a reminder of the basic principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations is clear proof of that. The headlines can be simple: Russia has vetoed the Charter of the United Nations.

In desperation, therefore, Moscow invokes the pretext of protecting Russians who are supposedly threatened in Crimea. I am sure that neighbouring countries that host Russian minorities appreciate this right to interfere that Russia has suddenly claimed for itself. But again, they are out of luck. There has been no violence, as confirmed by journalists and noted by the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and no trace, as confirmed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, of the hundreds of thousands of refugees that were predicted. Where have they gone? Do not worry; they never existed.

The supposed right does not exist, and there is no violence taking place. We therefore look to history. Crimea was Russian from 1783 to 1954. What does that mean? Will we take out our history books to review our borders or challenge or defend them? What date will we go back to? After all, Crimea was Russian for 170 years but a vassal of Turkey for three centuries. We know only too well that anything can be justified by history, particularly the unjustifiable.

Out of all of this — their confused flurry of activity, the speeches that are denied as soon as they are given and the arguments that are forgotten as soon as they are made — only force remains. Basically, it is simple: the Russian veto today is telling us that might is right.

Well, no. Force cannot override the law. That would be too serious and too dangerous for every Member State. Our duty is to raise the fragile barrier of law against the brutal nature of international relations,

which has led us into two world wars and has cost, as of this very moment, thousands of innocent lives in Syria and elsewhere. To accept the annexation of Crimea would be to give up everything that we are trying to build in this Organization. It would make a mockery of the Charter of the United Nations. It would once again make the sword the supreme arbiter of disputes.

The vast majority of Member States will prove, by their refusal to recognize the annexation of the Crimea, that they know that the territorial integrity of one of them is the guarantor of the territorial integrity of all. There are minorities all over the world. What would become of us if they became the pretext for any kind of adventure to be undertaken by an ambitious and enterprising neighbour? What will be the next Crimea? The annexation goes beyond Ukraine. It affects us all.

The veto should be a defeat for Russia alone. It should not take us with it. We must remain steadfast in our commitment to the principles it embodies, which are at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations, are our best defence against the return of a past in which Russian aggression against Ukraine emerges.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The draft resolution (S/2014/189) was designed to prevent a further escalation of the crisis in Ukraine. It invited Council members to uphold the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of a United Nations State Member and to reaffirm core United Nations principles. It was about sending a clear signal that holding a referendum in Crimea would take us further away from a diplomatic solution. The resounding message from today's vote is that Russia stands isolated in the Council and in the international community. Russia alone backs the referendum. Russia alone is prepared to violate international law, disregard the Charter of the United Nations and tear up its bilateral treaties. That message will be heard well beyond the walls of the Chamber.

The position of the international community is clear. If the referendum is held tomorrow, it will have no validity, no credibility and no recognition.

We trust that Russia will take notice of its isolation. On Thursday, we heard a clear message from the Prime Minister of Ukraine that Ukraine was willing to engage in dialogue with Russia to address its stated concerns (see S/PV.7134). The ball is now firmly in Russia's court. If Russia fails to respond to Ukraine's outstretched hand and instead continues with its military adventurism or seeks to take advantage of the illegal referendum, it

will lead to further escalation of tension in the region and further consequences for Russia.

We ask Russia to hear the collective voice of the international community today to rethink its actions and to take the decision to work with Ukraine and with the rest of the world to find a peaceful solution.

Ms. Murmokaite (Lithuania): My delegation is profoundly troubled by Russia's veto of the draft resolution (S/2014/189) on the illegality of the referendum in Crimea, and we are worried about its consequences for the future of peace and security in the region and internationally.

On 31 May 1997 in a ceremony at the monument of the Liberator Soldier in Kiev, the late President of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, during his historic visit to Ukraine solemnly declared, "Ukraine is an independent country, and we will hold this promise sacred". Russia "does not lay claim on any part of Ukraine or on any of its cities".

And yet, in defiance to the Budapest Memorandum, whereby the Russian Federation reaffirmed its obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, contrary to the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation of 1997, which affirms that both countries agree to respect each other's territorial integrity and confirm the viability of the borders existing between them, and in violation of the obligations and commitments undertaken by Russia during its accession to key regional and international organizations, Ukraine is about to be carved up. While the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and individual world leaders have been trying hard in the past few weeks to get Russia to engage with Ukrainian authorities in order to avoid a veritable crisis over Crimea, and while the Ukrainian authorities repeated their readiness to accept international monitors and mediation efforts, Russian troops and equipment were being amassed in Crimea, accompanied by aggressive anti-Ukrainian propaganda and hurried anti-constitutional acts by the Crimean Parliament to prepare the ground for an illegal referendum and eventual annexation of Crimea by Russia. Tomorrow a farce of a referendum will be held, in flagrant violation of the Ukraine and Crimean Constitutions and international law.

The historical inhabitants of the peninsula, the Crimean Tatars, who see their future in and with Ukraine, said they would boycott this illegal happening. All others who care for the sovereignty and indivisibility of the country, including Crimea's Ukrainians, will be left voiceless by this hastily concocted plebiscite, because the "yes" option to Crimea's future in Ukraine is simply not on the ballot.

Our Russian colleague has spoken about self-determination and the independence of Crimea. Let me quote the self-proclaimed Prime Minister of Crimea, Aksyonov: "No, we will not have independence", he said to the press, "Crimea should join Russia", and it may happen in the next week or so. It is in that context that the Council has voted for a draft resolution condemning the illegal referendum in Crimea, saying yes to the non-use of force in relations between the States; yes to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability and political independence of Ukraine, and by way of extension, of any sovereign State. My country's yes to the draft resolution is a yes to non-aggression, to a nation's free choice of its destiny and its alliances, to democracy, to the rule of law and to the internationally accepted rules of behaviour based on the norms and principles of international law.

Today's veto is not business as usual. By vetoing the draft resolution, built on the core tenants of the Charter of the United Nations, which clearly states that

"All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent for the Purposes of the United Nations"

and that

"The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means of their own choice".

The Russian Federation is challenging the very principles on which this Organization, the United Nations, is built and which supported the international system for the past seven decades. We deplore this veto. The world cannot allow a repetition of 1956, 1968 or 2008 in Europe. We call on all Member States

and regional and international organizations not to recognize the results of the referendum in Crimea and not to recognize any alteration of the status of Crimea carried out in clear and obvious violation of the Constitution of Ukraine, a United Nations founding Member.

We call on Russia to disown the illegal referendum in Crimea. International observers, monitors and mediators have been invited by the Ukrainian Government and must be allowed to do their job. We also urge Russia to reaffirm its treaty obligations vis-à-vis Ukraine, including respect for its sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, and to withdraw without delay its armed forces to the areas of their permanent stations. Only political dialogue and full respect of the Charter of the United Nations and international law can put an end to the crisis and prevent further bloodshed.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): Rwanda wishes to explain its vote on the text of the draft resolution (S/2014/189) before us. It is unfortunate that we have come to this today, as the situation could have been avoided. Voting for the text before us was a hard decision we had to make, and that is so because we are not convinced that the timing of the draft resolution was productive to the objective and purpose of the Security Council. It is hinged on the timing of the planned referendum in Crimea, which may not resolve the entire crisis. More cynical is the objective being stated in these corridors and in some capitals to isolate each other, including important stakeholders, in our search for a peaceful solution to the crisis in Ukraine. There is no need to isolate; however, there is a need for a real and frank dialogue. That is why we are in the Chamber, all of us, as a United Nations.

The situation in Ukraine has rapidly unfolded. We are concerned that the rhetoric of, and pressure from, many actors have blinded us from carefully analysing the situation and understanding the root causes, thereby preventing us from finding a suitable solution and, in the process, de-escalating the crisis. Why, then, did we vote in favour? The draft resolution contains important principles on which we all agree: respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries and the need for a de-escalation of the crisis. Most important to us is the fact that the draft text calls for a Ukrainian inclusive political dialogue.

We believe that the crisis in Ukraine can be settled primarily by a more vigorous campaign geared towards

winning the hearts of all Ukrainians and ensuring the protection of all. To date, we have not seen such steps. There has not been intercommunal dialogue. It is time for Ukrainians to listen to their hearts. It is time to see statesmen on all sides helping their communities to identify that silver thread that has kept them together as a united and prosperous nation for all these years.

In that regard, we appeal to all conflicting blocs in Ukraine to pause a little, close their ears to all aggravating rhetoric and give intercommunal talks a chance. If there is a need for credible mediators, the United Nations should rise to playing that role.

Once again, we invite both sides to consider the mutual interests of the people of Ukraine and to uphold their commitment to bilateral and multilateral agreements. We call on the international community to fulfil its obligation, to ensure no further deterioration and to respect the principles of peace and security.

Finally, this situation is not a win or a loss to any of us. Also, it should not be seen as bringing dishonour to any of us. But let it be a lesson to us all to truly commit and constructively work towards finding a sustainable solution to the process.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (spoke in Chinese): The current situation in Ukraine is highly complex and sensitive and has regional and international repercussions. The international community should together engage in pushing through a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine so as to truly maintain peace and stability in the region. What we are seeing Ukraine today is the result of a complex intertwinement of historical and contemporary factors. The situation in Ukraine, which seems to be accidental, has elements of the inevitable, and therefore calls for a comprehensive and balanced solution.

China always respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States. Those are long-standing and fundamental elements of China's foreign policy. At the same time, we note that foreign interference is also a significant factor, giving rise to violent clashes on the streets of Ukraine and resulting in the crisis in the country.

The failure to implement the 21 February agreement has further exacerbated the turmoil in Ukraine, with serious social and economic consequences for the country. We condemn and oppose all extreme and violent acts.

The key to resolving the crisis in Ukraine is to act within the framework of law and order, seeking an early solution to the differences through dialogue and negotiations, with due respect for the legitimate rights and interests of all those in the various communities and regions. All parties should move forward in the overall aim of maintaining regional peace and stability and of protecting the fundamental interests of all the communities in Ukraine in order to keep calm, exercise restraint and prevent a further escalation of the tension, while resolutely seeking a political solution so as to find a specific way out as soon as possible.

China has been calling for constructive efforts and the good offices of the international community to de-escalate the situation in Ukraine. We note the new developments and proposals in that regard. Drafting a resolution at this juncture will only lead to confrontation and further complicate the situation. It is not in line with the common interests of both the people of Ukraine and the international community. On the basis of the above, we could only abstain in the voting on the draft resolution (S/2014/189).

China holds a fair and impartial position on the issue of Ukraine. We will continue to mediate and to promote dialogue so as to play a greater constructive role in seeking a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine. To that end, we would like to make three proposals.

The first proposal is the establishment as soon as possible of an international coordination mechanism, comprising all the parties concerned, in order to explore means for the political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis. Secondly, in the meanwhile, all parties should refrain from taking any action that may further escalate the situation. Thirdly, international financial institutions should start to examine how to help to maintain the economic and financial stability of Ukraine.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Chile voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2014/189) because we believe that it is the appropriate response of the Council to the current crisis in Ukraine. Given that situation, at stake here are fundamental principles of international law, such as abstaining from the threat or use of force and respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

For its part, the Budapest Memorandum requires that the signatory parties observe the independence,

sovereignty and current borders of Ukraine and refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine.

The holding of a referendum on the status of Crimea is inconsistent with the Constitution of Ukraine, a unified State of which Crimea is an integral part. It is therefore fundamental that the rule of law be observed in Ukraine nationally and internationally.

It is for the people of Ukraine alone to determine their future in a democratic and inclusive process that guarantees the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and respect for the rights of minorities. The crisis must be resolved peacefully and through dialogue, in accordance with the norms of international law.

Chile regrets that the United Nations organ that has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security has not been able to adopt a draft resolution. Today, owing to the use of the veto, the Council has not fulfilled its obligation.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina): The delegation of Argentina believes that there is not much sense in making declarations about future events and hypothetical consequences. However, we voted for the draft resolution contained in document S/2014/189 because it reasserts the primacy of the principle of territorial integrity. We did so in the hope that the draft resolution could contribute to promoting constructive dialogue in Ukraine and a search for solutions through peaceful means and which includes all political and social actors who today disagree.

We trust that all the parties in Ukraine will refrain from unilateral action that could hamper dialogue or obviate opportunities for a peaceful and negotiated solution. We believe that it is for the Ukrainians to manage their internal affairs and to interpret those actions.

It is not for the Security Council to define this situation. Our responsibility is to maintain international peace and security. We therefore hope that all countries will respect the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and uphold their commitment to act strictly in compliance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, with the goal of achieving a peaceful solution in the country.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Australia is seriously disturbed that the draft resolution contained in document S/2014/189 before us was vetoed. Its purpose

was to reaffirm the fundamental principles and norms governing relations between States in the post-1945 world — obligations that form the core of the Charter of the United Nations — respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, the obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, the illegality of the acquisition of territory through the threat or use of force and the obligation to settle disputes by peaceful means.

As the body mandated under the United Nations Charter with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has a primordial responsibility to uphold those obligations. As Council members, we do so on behalf of all Member States. The draft resolution directly and carefully reflects those fundamental norms. There is nothing in it that any State Member of the United Nations could reasonably oppose. Russia's decision to veto the resolution is therefore profoundly unsettling.

The referendum to be held tomorrow in Crimea is dangerous and destabilizing. It is unauthorized and invalid. The international community will not recognize the result nor any action taking on the basis of it.

With or without a resolution, the message from Council members and the wider international community has been overwhelming. The de-escalation of the current crisis is imperative. Russia must pull back its forces to their bases and decrease their numbers to agreed levels. It must allow international observers access to Crimea. It must demonstrate its respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including by desisting from any recognition of or action on the basis of the results of the Crimean referendum. It must engage in direct dialogue with Ukraine, as Ukraine has repeatedly requested, either bilaterally or through a diplomatic mechanism such as a contact group.

Russia can be under no misapprehension about the action the international community is demanding it take. Should it fail to respond, there will be consequences. The international community will demand it.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document S/2014/189, as we firmly believe that the unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine should be fully respected and that the future of Ukraine should

be decided by the Ukrainians themselves without any intervention or influence by outside forces. We think that the draft resolution clearly embodies those principles.

It is regrettable that the draft resolution was not adopted by the Security Council today. Still, we very much hope that today's failure will not close the window on a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the crisis.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): Nigeria voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document S/2014/189 because it reflects the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, which obliges all States to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any Member State. The United Nations Charter also obliges States to settle their disputes by peaceful means. All throughout the crisis in Ukraine, Nigeria has consistently and unequivocally called on all concerned to abide by those principles in the interests of international peace and security.

The draft resolution, which is not a country-specific draft resolution but one that underscores universally agreed principles and the sanctity of international law, also mentions the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, which provides a framework within which the crisis could be peacefully resolved. We have consistently called for dialogue, mediation, restraint and an end to hostile rhetoric. Therefore, Nigeria is fundamentally opposed to the threat or use of force in settling international disputes. The lessons of history are not far-fetched, and we remain vigilant that the mistakes of history not be repeated by those alive today.

Nigeria has consistently advocated for mediation and the pacific settlement of disputes, including territorial disputes. Our willing submission to the rule of the International Court of Justice in our dispute with the Republic of Cameroon should serve as a beacon and an inspiration to law-abiding nations.

Nigeria is vehemently opposed to unilateral secession or forceful excision of territory designed to alter the configuration of States in their internationally recognized boundaries. Standing on that fundamental principle, Nigeria is opposed to any unilateral declaration by a component part of a State that will alter the configuration of the State to which it appropriately belongs.

It is therefore needless to restate that the impending referendum in Crimea is not in consonance with the

Constitution of Ukraine. The consequences of any defiance are better imagined than described.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): Since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, Chad has consistently expressed its commitment to the territorial integrity and unity of Ukraine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The intangibility of borders and territorial integrity of States is a sacred principle set forth in the Constitutive Act of the African Union. Chad's vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document S/2014/189 reflects that commitment.

Chad takes note with great concern the persistence of the escalation of the crisis in Ukraine, which is taking place despite the repeated appeals of the international community, and particularly the Security Council, for restraint and calm. We believe that it is still possible for the parties to open the way towards national reconciliation and maintaining Ukraine's unity by engaging in inclusive dialogue among the various components with respect for diversity, human rights and in particular the rights of minorities.

Chad reiterates its call for respect for territorial integrity, the non-use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Also, we would like to once again call for calm and restraint. We believe that the solution to the crisis can only be a political and negotiated one.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Husseini (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Jordan has voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document S/2014/189 out of its respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence and non-interference in its internal affairs. Moreover, it calls for adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially Article 1, and to the use of peaceful means to settle disputes.

Jordan confirms the importance of upholding the territorial integrity of Ukraine and subjecting all its territories, including Crimea, to Ukrainian sovereignty, in accordance with the principles of international law and relevant international resolutions, including the 1994 Budapest Memorandum and the 1997 Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Luxembourg.

Luxembourg deeply regrets that the draft resolution (S/2104/189), proposed by the United States of America, on the situation in Ukraine was not adopted because of the vote against it by Russia, a permanent member of the Council.

Luxembourg voted in favour of the draft resolution and is also a sponsor of the text, as did many United Nations States Members. Why? Because the draft resolution was based on principles and dialogue.

First, with regard to the principles, the draft resolution was intended to recall the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as set out in particular in Article 2 of the Charter. The draft resolution was intended to reaffirm the Security Council's support for the sovereignty, independence, unity and the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. The Security Council should be unanimous in upholding those principles. The Charter of the United Nations states that in discharging its duties the Security Council "shall act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations". Today, the Russian veto prevented the Security Council from complying with that provision.

With regard to dialogue, in accordance with Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, the draft resolution under consideration by the Council this morning was intended to urge all parties to seek a peaceful settlement immediately through direct political dialogue, to exercise restraint, to refrain from any unilateral action and any inflammatory rhetoric that might increase tension and to engage fully in international mediation efforts. However, the referendum organized for tomorrow in Crimea is intended to change the status of the Ukrainian territory against the will of Ukraine. If the referendum were to take place, it would constitute a unilateral act that could very seriously destabilize Ukraine and the entire the region.

Pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations, Member States have conferred upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Today, the Russian veto prevented the Security Council from assuming that responsibility in the interest of peace and security in Ukraine and Europe.

The referendum organized for tomorrow in Crimea runs contrary to Ukraine's Constitution, which stipulates that the territory of Ukraine is indivisible

and inviolable. The referendum is also contrary to the Constitution of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The international community can in no way recognize its outcome.

The referendum of 16 March is part of a vicious cycle. The decision taken on 1 March by the Council of the Russian Federation to authorize the use of the Russian armed forces on Ukrainian territory, and the subsequent actions undertaken, constitute a flagrant violation of international law. Those actions violate the commitments Russia entered into with regard to Ukraine within the framework of the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership Agreement between Russia and Ukraine, signed in 1997. Had it been adopted, the draft resolution would have helped to put an end to that vicious cycle and the nationalist escalation that accompanies it.

Today's vote is a failure — a failure for the Security Council and the United Nations, but also, and above all, a failure for Russia.

Would it be naive to hope that, despite that failure, we can still find a peaceful solution to the crisis that Russia is imposing on Ukraine and the international community? For its part, Luxembourg will not abandon that hope. Even if diplomatic efforts have not yet borne fruit, they must continue to achieve a solution that respects the political independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in the interest of peace, stability and prosperity in Europe.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Security Council for their overwhelming support of the draft resolution contained in document S/2104/189, as well as for their support in trying to resolve the crisis by diplomatic and political means.

I would like to thank all the sponsors of the draft resolution for their support. In this difficult time for my country, we really need their support, and I want to assure them that it is highly appreciated by the people of Ukraine.

I would like to particularly thank the Member States who are the guarantors of the Budapest Memorandum who supported Ukraine — the United States, the United Kingdom, France and China — and who several times spoke in favour of territorial integrity. It is awful

that the other one, the fifth guarantor, the Russian Federation, violated its own obligations.

All the appeals by the united membership to the wisdom of the Russian leadership were not successful. I received a call 40 minutes ago as we were discussing the crisis in Crimea, Ukraine. Members noticed that somebody called me. Russian troops entered the mainland from the south, from Crimea. Now we are facing a new development and we are to face an even more dangerous stance of the Russian Federation.

I appeal to all Council members to find the means and measures in the Security Council and the United Nations, as well as at the bilateral level, to do the utmost possible to stop the aggressor, the Russian delegation, present in the Chamber.

For us it is no surprise that Russia has vetoed today's draft resolution. For that permanent member of the Council, it has become the custom to veto any measure aimed at maintaining international peace and security.

We remember the vetoes of draft resolutions on peacekeeping missions in Syria, which brought about thousands and thousands of deaths. I am confident that when Council members gather together next week with Ambassador Tanin to speak about the reform of the Security Council, the issue of the right of the veto will be discussed. Two cases, Syria and Crimea, will certainly be considered as examples of the behaviour of a permanent member of the Council when peace is needed.

(spoke in Russian)

The representative of the Russian Federation has stated many times in this Chamber that Russia's right of the veto was gained through the blood of the Second World War. I would like to recall that it was the collective bloodshed of Ukrainians, Belarusians and Georgians. To manipulate the issue of the bloodshed is absolutely unacceptable. Moreover, it is a manipulation of the right of the veto before the new blood on one's hands. Previously it was Georgian blood — now it is Ukrainian. I believe that such chaos should end now.

Today I take an optimistic view of the situation. Why so? Because I am convinced that the statement made by the Russian representative expressed not the voice of the Russian Federation, but rather the voice of the Soviet Union. The genuine voice of Russia today can be heard on the streets and squares of Moscow,

St. Petersburg, Samara and Yekaterinburg, where thousands and thousands of people have gone to express their support and desire to protect Ukraine and its territorial integrity. That represents the democratic future of Russia and the basis on which we will build our fraternal ties.

Today the question of how to stop the aggressor concerns all of us. It involves the loss of the entire system of values established over the years through the untiring efforts of Member States towards a collective security system and non-proliferation.

(spoke in English)

I am confident that today the entire United Nations family demonstrated its unity. Tragic and dramatic events in Ukraine have united all of us. We must demonstrate that we are capable of protecting the United Nations system and the global security system through a new approach. I am absolutely confident that we will be able to do that.

The President *(spoke in French)*: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to take the floor again to make an additional statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: Some colleagues today have achieved high levels of rhetoric. I must mention that the Ukrainian colleague nevertheless went far beyond anything permissible. If one is to speak of blood, indeed the blood is not on our hands but on the hands of his friends the nationalist radicals — the blood of those Ukrainians who were shot by snipers on days in February of this year — whose ideological fathers he defended not very long ago in the halls of the United Nations, stating that Nazi Ukrainian henchmen did not kill anyone and that those were falsehoods made up by the Soviet Union.

With regard to other statements, I must note that something has caught my attention. Colleagues that have taken the floor discussed poorly developed arguments, on the whole — it was not the argumentation put forward by my delegation, but distorted images or elements of our position. I will not comment on everything heard today — all of the highly unacceptable comments. I will, however, make a few comments.

The French colleague did not notice the smallest hint of violence in Ukraine. It is possible that he was unaware of what occurred on Saturday in Kharkiv, where two citizens were killed by fighters from other regions of Ukraine. In fact, the violence had to be noted as it took place during this month in Kyiv and in other regions of the country. There is a continuing threat of violence and a continuing threat of it spreading to other regions of Ukraine. Yet the violence has not occurred in Crimea, due to measures taken there.

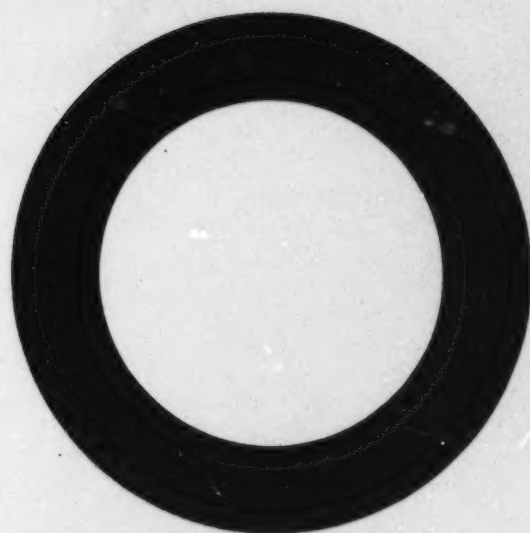
The Permanent Representative of the United States blamed Russia for illegally pursuing its ambitions. That does not apply to us; it is a phrase taken from the foreign policy arsenal of the United States. Ms. Power spoke of truth. The world would be very interested to know if Washington, D.C., would in fact tell the truth about its role in the development of the crisis in Ukraine. Finally, Ms. Power spoke of dreams and aspirations. But why has she negated the right of the people of Crimea to express their will tomorrow during the referendum?

To conclude, one of our colleagues said that Kyiv had extended a hand to Moscow and that we had refused to reciprocate. But the problem is not with Moscow; it has to do with the fact that Kyiv should have been the one to extend a hand to its people and regions, instead of intimidating them with repression and banning the use of the Russian language. Why, for instance, was the constitutional assembly not convened, and in reality, in the course of the constitutional process, it was not proved that the ideology and practice of radical nationalism did not prevail in Kyiv?

It is unfortunate that much time has been lost. Nevertheless, we would appeal to all to put an end to the confrontation and to begin constructive cooperation with a view to a long-term settlement of the situation in Ukraine, in the interests of all of the people, including those in the eastern and south-eastern regions.

The President *(spoke in French)*: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.



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Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7139th meeting

 Monday, 17 March 2014, 10 a.m.
 New York

President:	Ms. Lucas	(Luxembourg)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaite
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Manzi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

 Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its
 implications for international peace and security (S/2014/163)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-26620 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2014/163)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Canada, Germany, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, Slovakia, Sweden and Turkey to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jan Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2014/184, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Australia.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/163, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: Khanjar Wabel Abdallah of Lebanon, Basra Hassan of the United States and of Somali origin, Nasreen Khan of Pakistan and Vadim Nazarov of the Russian Federation are four members of the United Nations family who were brutally murdered in January. They died, along with 17 other Afghan and international civilians, in a suicide assault in Kabul city. I offer my deepest condolences to their families in recognizing the sacrifice of those dedicated international civil servants.

In less than three weeks' time, Afghanistan intends to hold presidential and provincial council elections, which will effect the country's first democratic transfer of power. Leadership and commitment remain critical to the holding of that historic event. In underscoring a stable political dispensation, those elections are a defining moment that will earn President Hâmid Karzai a place in history.

I urge all eligible Afghan citizens — men and women — to exercise their franchise on 5 April. I urge them to not let spoilers and terrorists deprive them of their choice or of their future. Participation as voters, elections officials and observers is a rejection of force, violence and intimidation as the means by which their proud nation decides its leadership. At this delicate juncture in Afghanistan's transitions, it is a credible electoral transition that can provide much-needed stability and predictability through a popular mandate across ethnic lines for broader political, economic and social development agendas, including peace and reconciliation.

Technical preparations for what is an Afghan-managed and Afghan-led electoral process remain on track and are of a better quality than previously, including in fraud prevention and mitigation.

In addition to the electoral authorities, the responsibility for peaceful and credible polls largely rests with political leaders, candidates and their supporters. I urge all candidates to guide and shape the actions and attitudes of their supporters with serious public commitment to opposing fraud committed in their name. Where there are alleged electoral violations, complainants should seek immediate redress through institutional means.

Elections will necessarily have losers, but, in particular in the current conditions in Afghanistan, they should not be a winner-takes-all contest. While in no way replacing the people's voice at the polls, I urge candidates to come to the understanding that not being the winner is not *prima facie* evidence of fraud. Threats of civil disobedience over alleged fraud now, weeks before the elections, or the resort to civil disruption only increase tensions and create confusion.

Security will have a major impact on the polls. To date, election-related violence has been of a lower order than in 2009 or 2010, even as general security incidents have increased. However, even election violence is on the rise.

I welcome the support for the electoral process expressed by parts of the insurgency, notably Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's armed wing of Hezb-e Islami. However, I want to make very clear that even groups such as the Taliban that reject the elections have an obligation to respect a civilian process. I am gravely disturbed by the Taliban's recent declaration that it will seek to disrupt the process by force, unleashing a campaign of terror. Voters, electoral workers, candidates and observers are all civilians. Targeting civilians or carrying out indiscriminate attacks on polling centres and other civilian locations undermine any claims to legitimate political status and are acts punishable under international law.

I bear with me, for the Secretary-General, a message signed by a quarter of a million Afghan women in support of peace. I commend the organizers and petitioners who have raised their voice — the voices of the majority of Afghans. These women demand only the chance for a secure future for their families. It is a message of hope and resilience amid the misery and death inflicted by terrorism, extremism, transnational criminal networks and local power-holders.

A breakthrough in direct talks between Afghan authorities and the Taliban remains elusive thus far, despite some interesting recent initiatives by the High Peace Council. Efforts to build understanding and agree on frameworks must continue while patiently building an environment conducive to later, more formal efforts, in which the United Nations should, and will, have a more prominent role.

Afghanistan's ultimate stability and sustainability lies in the region. As other international actors draw down, I am pleased to see neighbouring countries and regional powers recognizing the need for active engagement in support of Afghan solutions. There is a realization that a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan is ultimately in the self-interest of all.

I am pleased to note continued practical progress being made under the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan. Peace and stability in Afghanistan will not be sustainable without economic and social transitions assisted by donors meeting their commitments in the years to come. At January's special Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board meeting, in which all 11 presidential candidates participated, representatives of 50 Member States underscored their continuing support

for Afghanistan. The levels of international assistance pledged remains truly exceptional, while remaining dependent on successful political transition and demonstrable progress in Government commitments to governance, reforms, economic sustainability and a rights-based agenda.

I welcome assurances by the presidential candidates of their commitment to sustaining and accelerating momentum under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. There are risks, but there are even more opportunities in returning to a more normalized development agenda. In looking forward to the ministerial-level development conference with the new Government later this year, it cannot be business as usual. Strengthening employment, generating licit economic activity and undercutting the burgeoning illicit economy should be central to all development approaches.

Narcotics production and trafficking undermine the well-being of the population, economy and institutions of Afghanistan and the wider region and increasingly contribute to the financing of terrorism. A shared long-term strategy, high-level leadership and genuine political will are required of both the Government and the international community.

Sustaining the gains Afghanistan has made in human rights over the past decade and, in particular, the rights of women and children is not a luxury and must not be sacrificed to short-term political expediency. Justice, good governance, the rule of law and human rights are crucial elements of lasting peace, equitable development and human security.

I welcome the Government's commitment to ending child recruitment by 2016, which requires that implementation of the action plan on underage recruitment be expedited.

As the new United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) mandate is renewed, I again stress the United Nations' long-term commitment to a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan. Given the current elements of uncertainty, interlocutors almost unanimously stress the continuity and value that UNAMA brings in the exercise of good offices, the protection and promotion of human rights and the facilitation of international development coherence. The Mission's national footprint continues to be an invaluable asset in undertaking mandated elections, outreach and human rights activities. Indeed, as

other international institutions and Member States reduce their sub-national presence, the international community is increasingly seeking our support in understanding and accessing a diverse country. All that work in implementing our complex mandate requires adequate and predictable resources.

In highlighting progress and positive momentum, I emphasize that gains are fragile. Yet Afghanistan is not poised atop an inevitable post-2014 abyss, as some doomsayers have predicted. What is needed in such a period of unpredictability is the smooth and timely transfer of political power. The success of the April 2014 elections will be of critical significance in reinforcing Afghanistan's institutional and political stability and instilling confidence in the future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Kubiš for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): I thank you, Madam President, for your able leadership of the Council this month. My thanks also go to our friend Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his briefing and for his skilful leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We convey our gratitude to Australia and Ambassador Quinlan for his country's committed work as the penholder in the Council on Afghanistan and for the spirit of cooperation shown during the course of negotiations on the UNAMA draft resolution (S/2014/184). I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the recent Secretary-General's report on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2014/163).

On 28 March 2002, in the wake of the Bonn Conference, the Council voted on resolution 1401 (2002), on the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan—a political mission to lead international civilian coordination efforts and to support Afghanistan in building a democratic, stable and peaceful country. Since then, its comprehensive focus on security, the economy, governance and development challenges has been essential to my Government's work to lay the foundations for sustainable development and peace in the country, and the UNAMA mandate has been renewed regularly with the full support of the Government of Afghanistan.

Throughout the past decade, UNAMA has remained at the centre of international engagement in support of Afghanistan, an engagement characterized by the involvement of more than 70 countries and dozens of international organizations, known as the donor community. The international community's collective efforts have spanned all dimensions, and our achievements attained through shared efforts have been exceptional. The country is more unified, millions of boys and girls are in school, more Afghans have access to health care than ever before and all Afghans enjoy their fundamental human rights as guaranteed by our Constitution.

We reached the final stage of transition this year, as the country began to stand on its own feet and take charge of its own destiny. Afghan National Security Forces assumed full security responsibility nationwide, showing even more capability and professionalism as international forces draw down. The Government began to renew its international partnerships while asserting greater Afghan ownership and leadership over the country's future. And now, after 12 years of unprecedented international cooperation and engagement, the Afghan people are less than a few weeks away from the pinnacle of transition, that is, presidential and provincial elections.

On 5 April, Afghans will cast their votes to choose the future leader of the country and their provincial representatives. That will be a historic event, marking the first peaceful transition of power through a democratic process. Moreover, a legitimate political transition is essential to our efforts to secure a brighter and more peaceful future. After decades of war, Afghans have worked intently to build a new foundation for progress in Afghanistan. Elections represent the hope that the work will continue and provide an opportunity for its advancement throughout the transformation decade.

Election preparations have been long under way, with the help of the international community and the United Nations. It is crucial that the elections be legitimate, credible and transparent, as expected by all. To that end, the Independent Election Commission is in the lead in administering, adjudicating and managing the polls and in overseeing logistical and technical preparations, with the support of our international partners. The Independent Electoral Complaints Commission is well positioned to prevent fraud and misconduct. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Interior has intensified efforts to ensure security on election

day, preparing 400,000 Afghan security forces to protect the 7,168 polling stations on 5 April, with plans to deploy 13,000 female polling station searchers and provide security to the 308 female provincial council candidates. The number of international and national observers will be in the thousands.

The participation of Afghans in the lead-up to the elections has been monumental. All segments of society are deeply involved in the elections, many of them for the first time, keenly participating to ensure they have a say over the country's future. Importantly, women are involved in the elections as candidates, campaigners, electoral workers and voters. Today, of the 3.4 million new voters registered for the April election, 35 per cent are women. Additionally, presidential candidates have had historical media exposure, particularly through a number of televised debates, allowing candidates the opportunity to present their programmes to the electorate and enhancing countrywide involvement in the political process. That sets a new precedent for our young democracy.

With all Afghans focused keenly on the elections, we have not lost sight of the challenges facing us this year. That is crucial to the preservation of the gains of the past decade and to a successful departure towards the transformation decade. To address those challenges, a serious focus is needed on the following three main areas.

The first area is Afghanistan's continuing cooperation with the international community. That is essential to a successful transition this year, to the transformation decade ahead and to long-term peace, security and development in the country. As demonstrated by the consultative Loya Jirga of November 2013, the Afghan people believe in the importance of continuing strategic relations with the United States, NATO and the wider international community. To that end, we are certain that the bilateral security agreement with the United States will be signed soon.

The second aspect is fiscal stability and the sustainable economic growth and development of Afghanistan. We welcome the progress made towards fulfilling the commitments set out in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, which is essential to the country's long-term stability and sustainability. In addition to that Framework, the Government continues to further the agreements reached at the London, Kabul, Bonn and Tokyo Conferences and the Lisbon

and Chicago Summits, which aim to enhance national leadership and ownership and Afghanistan's economic self-sufficiency strategy.

The third element is regional cooperation. As we move towards the end of the transition this year, it is fundamental to Afghanistan's stability that its neighbours and countries in the region play their role in contributing to peace and security in the country. It is clear that the prosperity and security of all countries in the region are deeply interlinked. My Government therefore continues to strengthen regional cooperation networks through multilateral processes, such as the Istanbul Process, as well as bilateral efforts. Regional cooperation is also essential to peace and reconciliation, as well as related outreach to the Taliban and other groups that continue to fight against the Government.

Throughout all the that, protecting the rights of all Afghans remains a fundamental priority. That includes ensuring the right of all Afghan people to good governance, justice, health care and education and to live free from violence. In that regard, Afghanistan is committed to preventing and mitigating the toll of violence on civilians, particularly women and children. We condemn in the strongest terms the continuing violence against the Afghan people, including women and children, by extremists. With elections presenting an opportunity for all Afghans to come together in unity, the impetus for the armed opposition to reject its brutal tactics, contribute meaningfully to the country and heed the call for peace have never been stronger than today.

As we renew the mandate of UNAMA for another year, we are well aware of the continuing importance of the role of the United Nations as a whole at this crucial time for the country. We expect the international community to stand firmly for peace and security in Afghanistan and to further our work to ensure that the hard-won achievements of the past decade are protected. After decades of war and instability and 12 years of tremendous progress, it is crucial that the momentum continue towards our goal of achieving a long-lasting, stable, peaceful and democratic Afghanistan.

The President (spoke in French): It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2145 (2014).

I shall now give the floor to members of the Council.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I thank Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his briefing this morning and for his leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his statement and his close engagement in the Council's work on Afghanistan.

I also want to recognize the dedication and efforts of all United Nations personnel in Afghanistan. The death of four United Nations staff, as well as Afghan and international civilians, in the attack of 17 January on the Taverna restaurant in Kabul was a reminder of the risks faced by civilians in Afghanistan, including United Nations and other international staff. The Council condemned that attack in the strongest terms, and I reiterate our condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of those involved.

Resolution 2145 (2014), which we have just adopted, is a firm statement of the international community's continuing commitment to Afghanistan and its people. The resolution provides the right mandate to ensure that the United Nations can continue to support Afghanistan during the completion of security transition. This 12-month renewal preserves UNAMA's core mandate, ensuring continuity in UNAMA's support for Afghan-led efforts to strengthen governance and build capacity.

As we know, 2014 is a pivotal year for Afghanistan, with the Government assuming full responsibility for security as well as the management of political transition, which is as critical to Afghanistan's transformation as the continuing security, stabilization and reconstruction efforts.

The international community will be closely watching the presidential and provincial council elections early next month. They constitute a historic moment for Afghanistan's transition. An inclusive, transparent and credible presidential election process is necessary.

Australia welcomes the United Nations role in supporting the elections and encourages the Afghan Government to continue to work with the United Nations in order to strengthen the sustainability, integrity and inclusiveness of the electoral process. We encourage continued efforts to ensure that women are able to safely exercise their right to vote and to participate in the process. Their participation will be a decisive measure of the representativeness and success of the elections. It is also essential that the Independent Election Commission and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission be enabled to fulfil their critical roles.

Beyond the elections, we look to a new Afghan Government to address key political, governance and security challenges, with the support of the United Nations. The leadership and considered decisions of the new Government will be the key determinant of the international community's support for Afghanistan post-2014.

The 2012 Tokyo Conference saw an unprecedented level of resources pledged to Afghanistan. Progress against Afghanistan's commitments by a new Afghan Government, as well as by the international community, is necessary to support sustainable economic and social development in Afghanistan. Of particular importance will be progress by the Afghan Government to improve governance and the rule of law, including transitional justice, budget execution, combating corruption and improving accountability.

On human rights, Afghanistan needs to be vigilant in building on the gains of the past decade, particularly in relation to the rights of women and girls. Today's resolution reaffirms that message. We continue to urge the full implementation of the law on elimination of violence against women and to encourage the Afghan Government to finalize and implement a national action plan on women and peace and security so as to support the active participation of women in the peace and reconciliation process.

We remain concerned about the increasing number of civilians killed and wounded in conflict, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/163). That includes development and humanitarian workers. We support further sustained efforts by Afghanistan to track civilian casualties.

We also encourage the Afghan authorities to provide full support to the Afghanistan Independent Human

Rights Commission so that it can fulfil its necessary role as an effective and independent institution.

The Afghan Government must send a strong message to the international community about its commitment to security over the long term. Security challenges limit the international community's ability to provide effective support. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) has demonstrated its capability in fighting the insurgency and providing security for the Afghan people, but it must continue to expand security across Afghanistan. Australia will continue to support the ANSF, through our sustainment commitment, agreed in Chicago in 2012, and through the continued presence of Australian military personnel in training and advisory roles.

We continue to encourage Afghanistan to sign the bilateral security agreement with the United States and to conclude NATO status-of-forces agreement negotiations as soon as possible to provide the legal basis for the post-2014 mission and to enable planning for a post-2014 military presence to proceed.

In conclusion, Australia, along with the United Nations and international community, will continue to support Afghanistan at the national level. But reform and progress are naturally the responsibility of the Afghan Government and people. Leadership by the Afghan Government will be critical in meeting the security, political and economic challenges in 2014 and beyond transition.

Ms. Paik Ji-ah (Republic of Korea): I thank Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his informative briefing. I appreciate the dedication he has shown in implementing his mandate and commend the continued resilience of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his remarks.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express our deep condolences for the loss of United Nations and other international staff members in the attack on a restaurant in Kabul in January.

Afghanistan has achieved considerable progress in its political, security and economic transition over the past decade. The final year of transition is critical in making that progress sustainable and irreversible. In that vein, I would like to touch upon three main areas where more effort is required to facilitate a peaceful transition and lasting development in Afghanistan.

First, the presidential and provincial council elections scheduled for 5 April will be a significant milestone in Afghanistan's political transition. We welcome the electoral preparations made by the Afghan Government, including the mobilization of observers for the presidential elections and the security assessment of polling centres. Given the growing attacks from a number of groups, including the Taliban, security for electoral personnel and voters must be ensured. It is also important that any incitement to defamation and violence not be tolerated, with a view to safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process.

Secondly, with regard to the security situation, while we welcome the ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces and police, the growing number of security incidents demonstrates that grave security challenges remain. In particular, we strongly condemn indiscriminate attacks on civilians and humanitarian personnel. We reiterate that all parties must take every feasible step to comply with their obligations under international law. The ongoing support of the international community in strengthening Afghan security capacity and enhancing cross-border cooperation are crucial to the improvement of the overall security situation.

Thirdly, as noted at the special meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board in Kabul in January, the Afghan Government should continue to implement the key commitments of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. In particular, the Government needs to reinforce its efforts to tackle corruption and the illicit economy.

We also urge the Afghan Government to make additional efforts in partnership with the United Nations for the protection of women and children. The law on the elimination of violence against women should be fully implemented to end impunity for violence against women. It is also necessary to support the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in assuming its full functions.

In conclusion, in facing the final year of transition, the sustained support of the international community remains essential for the improvement of predictability and confidence in Afghanistan. We appreciate UNAMA's contribution to stability and development in Afghanistan and fully support resolution 2145 (2014), on the extension of its mandate.

Mr. Oyarzábal (Argentina) (spoke in Spanish): I thank Special Representative Ján Kubiš for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2014/163), as well as the representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, for sharing with the Security Council the vision and priorities of his Government, which are essential to our work.

Today Afghanistan is preparing for the 5 April elections, which the Secretary-General rightly considers to be a landmark event, as they will be the first transfer of power in Afghanistan from one president-elect to another. Argentina wishes to express to the people and the Government of Afghanistan its desire that the presidential and provincial elections will allow the country to consolidate its political transition, which will form the basis for strengthening its stability, reinforcing its national unity and promoting its sustainable development in an equitable manner.

In order for the political transition to be legitimate, the elections of 5 April must be transparent, inclusive and credible. The role of the United Nations in providing technical support and in facilitating coherence in international support for the electoral process, including international observers, is certainly important. But it is the Afghans themselves who have the primary responsibility for making the electoral process complete and inclusive and for making the results truly representative. In that context, the responsibility incumbent upon electoral officials is clear, as it is on the candidates and their followers to comply with the electoral laws and accept the results from the polls, channelling their complaints through the institutions established for that purpose. Fundamentally, it is necessary that the qualified Afghan citizens come together en masse to vote in order to ensure the representativeness of the elections and the elected authorities that result therefrom.

The participation of women as voters, candidates and elected officials is crucial. We are concerned about the disqualification of candidates by the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission on the basis of education, not least because such decisions principally affect women. The number of women on the Commission, which represents less than 8 per cent of the Commission as a whole, in a country where the female population is larger than the male population, is insufficient, although we recognize the efforts undertaken to increase the participation of women.

Finally, citizens should exercise their rights in a safe environment, not only in Kabul but also in the interior of the country. Security will be critical to ensuring that voters trust that they can express their will. The challenges in that regard cannot be underestimated.

The challenges that the authorities elected in the 5 April elections will face are both known and overwhelming. They include achieving the generalized desire for peace of the Afghan people through the realization of agreements that prevent or mitigate in the short term the growing cost in lives of civilians as a result of the complex conflict affecting the country. In that context, a peace process or direct talks among the Government of Afghanistan and the principal armed opposition groups is essential, as is continuing to strengthen bilateral ties between Afghanistan and countries of the region at a time when the international community is reducing its presence in the country. There is no substitute for meaningful discussions that include the Taliban and other insurgent groups to bring an end to the spiral of violence that continues to bloody Afghanistan, as is seen in the number of attacks that took place in 2013 — the second highest number in terms of levels of violence since the fall of the Taliban regime.

A modern, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan depends in large measure on the success of the reconciliation process in the framework of a comprehensive strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights and access to education, health care and employment for all Afghans. In that respect, prioritized efforts should focus on the acceleration and consolidation of Afghanistan's progress on human rights since 2001. It is the absolute responsibility of the Government of Afghanistan to ensure the full implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women and that perpetrators of violence, particularly against women, are held accountable for their actions.

It is no surprise that a country with the human, cultural and natural resources of Afghanistan is considered one of the least developed countries in the world, when its security sector demands nearly 50 per cent of its annual budget. In that context, the implementation of the Kabul process and the coordination of development assistance remain essential. It is important that the international community continue to provide for the 5.4 million Afghans lacking access to health care and the 2.2 million facing food insecurity.

Argentina voted in favour of resolution 2145 (2014) because it believes that the role of the United Nations will remain equally critical in the election process, in assisting the future Government to coordinate international aid, in good offices and the peace process, as well as in human rights and humanitarian assistance and economic and social development in the long term.

Mr. Manzi (Rwanda): I wish to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his comprehensive briefing. His self-motivated leadership and the effective role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) have contributed to the stabilization of Afghanistan. We fully support the dedicated work of the Special Representative and his staff. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his statement.

In less than one month, Afghans will decide their future leadership through the electoral process scheduled to take place on 5 April. The elections will become an important milestone for Afghans, the region and the international community as a whole. We welcome the progress made in the process of organizing the elections. We encourage all parties to take ownership of the electoral process, supported by the United Nations and other partners, and expect the elections to be held in an inclusive, transparent and peaceful atmosphere.

As we take note of the Government's efforts to try to create a secure environment in which the people of Afghanistan can live without fear of terrorism and violence, following the transfer of security responsibilities to Afghan security forces in June 2013, we remain concerned, as highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2014/163), of the increased security incidents in the country ahead of the presidential elections. We condemn those cowardly acts of violence mainly targeting international staff and innocent civilians, especially the recent attack that took the lives of four United Nations personnel and 17 Afghans. Our condolences go to the families and Governments of the victims. We appeal to the international community to continue supporting and strengthening the capacities of the Afghan forces to enable them to deal with the security challenges the country faces. Support to the Afghan security forces will become vital after the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force. We hope that modalities for further cooperation

between NATO and Afghanistan will be positively defined in months ahead.

On the political process, Rwanda supports an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned national reconciliation process, with a view to achieving sustainable peace and stability in the country and in the region as a whole. We express our strong support to the active role played by the High Peace Council in promoting national reconciliation efforts. We hope that the international community will support and work with the Afghanistan Government and people in their efforts to create an enabling environment for the reconciliation process. The extension of the UNAMA mandate today is again another expression of the support and confidence of the Council for Afghanistan's transitional political process. UNAMA will continue to play a central role in assisting Afghanistan as it moves forward in its transition process.

On the pledges made to support Afghanistan, it is important, as declared in Tokyo and in Chicago, for the international community to remain engaged in serious long-term partnerships with Afghanistan, by supporting its efforts through the transitional phase and beyond 2014. Even as progress is being reviewed under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework to address key challenges, pledges and commitments of assistance to Afghanistan must be honoured.

On drug trafficking and use, the opium production in Afghanistan in 2013 increased by 36 per cent as compared to the figures of 2012. It poses a serious threat to the health and well-being of the population, the economy of the region and the entire international community. Opium plays a key role in financing insurgency, hence causing instability in the country and the region. All preventive measures put in place have not yielded any tangible results. We strongly believe that it is the responsibility of everyone, especially the Afghan Government, regional countries and the entire international community to prevent narcotics trafficking and the resulting earnings that sponsor insurgents and acts of terrorism.

In conclusion, Rwanda stresses its firm belief that a sincere and inclusive Afghan-led political process will lead to sustainable stability, peace and development. Challenges will continue to exist, but the international community must remain united by the side of the Afghan Government in seeking a durable solution to terrorism and extremism.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kubiš for his update and Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

I would like to comment on two aspects of the situation in Afghanistan, that is, political developments and the security situation.

On political developments, we are pleased to note that preparations for the elections of 5 April remain on track and that vigorous political activity can be observed across the country, including large-scale rallies. The recent pronouncement by President Karzai that the Government would not interfere in the April elections is commendable. That commitment by the Government is particularly significant as the elections will mark the first time since 2001 that there is a democratic transfer of power from one president to another. We also applaud the use of televised debates in the campaign, as it will allow candidates to get their message across to a broad spectrum of the Afghan public.

We are deeply concerned by reports of threats against campaign workers and election officials. We are also concerned by the reported assassination attempts and killings linked to the elections. We are, however, encouraged to note that politically motivated violence has so far not constituted a strategic threat to the elections.

The risk assessment of the 7,168 polling units conducted by the Government, which certifies that Afghan security forces could secure 94 per cent of the units, is also encouraging. We strongly urge all the citizens of Afghanistan to shun violence in the run-up to the elections.

With regard to security, we note that, although the situation remains volatile, Afghan security forces have proven capable of defending territory from attacks by anti-Government elements. We regret that this is at the cost of significant casualties. We also note with concern that the reporting period saw an unprecedented number of suicide attacks, killings and other criminal acts that had a negative impact on both the people of Afghanistan and the ability of the United Nations to undertake mandated tasks and activities. In that regard, we strongly condemn the coordinated attack of 17 January on a Kabul restaurant in which a number of civilians, including four United Nations officials, lost their lives. An attack on United Nations officials is an attack on the international community.

We welcome the cooperation between the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in developing a strategy for the disposal of explosive remnants of war from military bases, firing and demolition ranges and other sites across the country. In 2013, 5 per cent of civilian deaths in conflict in Afghanistan resulted from explosive remnants of war. We therefore see their disposal as vital to reducing the number of civilian deaths in the conflict.

As ISAF prepares to leave Afghanistan at the end of 2014, we encourage the Afghan Government to continue to engage with all regional and international partners in order to ensure that a security vacuum is not created that could be exploited by anti-Government elements.

We welcome the adoption of resolution 2145 (2014), which will enable UNAMA and the Government of Afghanistan to consolidate the gains made in the country in recent times.

Finally, Nigeria is hopeful that in the near future we shall see a stable, peaceful, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan where the human rights of all its citizens are promoted and protected.

Mr. Bertoux (France) (spoke in French): I welcome the presence of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš in the Chamber and I thank him for his briefing and his work at the head of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Through the Special Representative, I would like to commend the efforts of the international and local Mission staff, who work in complex conditions and, unfortunately, sometimes even sacrifice their own lives. I would also like to welcome the Ambassador of Afghanistan, Mr. Tanin, and thank him for his intervention.

I associate myself in advance with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union.

Afghanistan has entered a period marked by profound changes: two transitions, a security transition and a political transition are under way. The year 2014 will see the end of the military presence of the international coalition in the form that we have known so far. A new mission of advice, training and support will take over from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in accordance with the commitments entered into at the NATO Summit in Chicago in 2012 to support the Afghan security forces over the long run.

Similarly, Afghanistan has already been preparing for many months for the presidential election, the first round of which is scheduled for 5 April. That election will clearly show that democracy has taken root in the country. The peaceful and lawful transfer of presidential authority is a sufficiently rare event to celebrate. A new President, the second since the fall of the Taliban, will take over the stewardship of the country, and we will be there to support him in fulfilling his mission.

We have just adopted resolution 2145 (2014). UNAMA's mandate has been extended for one year without major changes because of the election of the new Afghan Government in 2014 and because of other uncertainties that still have an impact on the shape of the future security arrangement. In that context, we believe that UNAMA, which is the centre of the international community's action in Afghanistan and which has proved itself over the course of 10 years, must be able to act next year based on a solid mandate.

The international community's efforts should adapt to the changes in the situation on the ground. In particular, the model of development, which is based on a counter-insurgency strategy, should be revised. However, we will not abandon the values we fought for alongside Afghans for 10 years. I have in mind in particular the role and rights of women in Afghan society.

We have less than 12 months ahead of us to evaluate and determine how the international community will be able to support Afghanistan in the long term. The mandate of UNAMA that we will adopt a year from now will have to be different, refocused on the priorities of the international community.

Put in a more visible and more central position, but also more complex, UNAMA's political role must be strengthened. The Mission, including the Special Representative, will have to provide its good offices to facilitate the implementation of the Afghan political process, especially in the areas of reconciliation and the strengthening of the rule of law, and support the efforts aimed at strengthening regional cooperation. UNAMA must also have additional capacity in the protection and promotion of human rights, an area in which it provides real expertise and an added value. It will have to play the role of coordinator of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to promote a model of development that meets the needs of an economy weakened by the decline in international

aid and the emergence of an illicit economy that fuels instability. To that end, we believe that it is important to simplify the mandate. However, we remain committed, as far as possible, to maintaining UNAMA's presence throughout the Afghan territory, which is essential for a clear and comprehensive view of the situation.

As others have said before, we are also concerned about the resurgence of drug trafficking. Unfortunately, the year 2013 saw a new record in opium production. Furthermore, Afghanistan has become the world's largest producer of cannabis resin. There are now even amphetamine production centres in the country.

We know about the efforts of Afghans to address that challenge. We know that taking up the challenge requires the commitment of everyone, especially Afghanistan's regional partners. We will stand alongside the Afghans in that task. But today I would like to address the entire international community. As the Secretary-General underscored in his report (S/2014/163), the risk of the emergence of a narco-State exists and it is serious. We have to consider actions today that will make it possible to shield Afghanistan tomorrow from the deleterious effects of drug trafficking, which are corruption and violence.

We know, as experience has shown, that drug trafficking often goes hand in hand with insurrection and a challenge to a central authority. We must do everything to avoid the worst: to leave Afghanistan to its own devices with an insurrection that is certainly weakened but not totally reduced; with the Afghan security forces, who have shown that they are robust and effective, but are concerned about the international community's withdrawal; and with a socioeconomic and institutional fabric that has been rewoven but is still very fragile.

In that respect, the role that the fight against drug trafficking plays in UNAMA's mandate must be strengthened. Clearly, we do not want to make UNAMA a counter-narcotics agency. However, all possible synergies between the activities of UNAMA and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Afghanistan should be strengthened. UNAMA must also support regional cooperation in that area by supporting the development of the law enforcement, judiciary and health capacities of the Afghan State.

The Afghanistan after 11 September is now a chapter in the history books, but if we want to help

Afghans to write a truly different chapter in the future we have to act now.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2014/163) and Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his briefing today. I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his remarks this morning.

This is the first opportunity for the Council to express directly to Special Representative Kubiš and his team the sadness that we all felt at the tragic loss of the lives of four United Nations colleagues on 17 January. That appalling attack was a stark reminder of the dangers that international civilian staff face, and we pay tribute to the efforts of Mr. Kubiš and his team in Afghanistan.

The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of today's resolution 2145 (2014), which renews the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). UNAMA plays a vital role in peacebuilding in Afghanistan and will continue to do so in 2014. I will focus my statement today on four key areas: security, elections, the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework and the United Nations future engagement in Afghanistan.

First, with regard to the security situation, we should be proud of our achievements. The determination and dedication of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Afghan National Security Forces have allowed the Government of Afghanistan to build the foundations of a stable and democratic country. The Afghan National Security Forces have risen to difficult challenges since taking full responsibility for Afghan security in June 2013, and we are encouraged by polling that shows growing confidence in their work. We expect the first all-female cohort of officer cadets to commence training in June. That is another significant achievement. However, we know that the support of NATO and the international community will continue to be vital in ensuring long-term security in Afghanistan. As a sign of our enduring commitment, the United Kingdom will contribute more than \$100 million a year until at least 2017 towards sustaining the Afghan national security forces. The United Kingdom also looks forward to hosting the NATO Summit later this year, which will provide the international community with an opportunity to reflect on ISAF's legacy and to set out NATO's post-2014 engagement in Afghanistan.

Secondly, on elections and the political transition, Afghanistan is entering the final phase of campaigning and technical preparations for elections. The presidential and provincial council elections are now less than four weeks away. This is truly a groundbreaking moment in Afghan politics, as Afghanistan moves into its transformation decade. The most recent figures show that over a third of those taking part in top-up voter registration are women. That is good news and will contribute to the inclusiveness of the elections. The United Kingdom has pledged \$11 million to build the capacity of the women elected to provincial councils to ensure that their voices are heard in the democratic process. Transparency and inclusiveness are vital to ensuring the credibility of the elections. In that regard, we welcome the recent decision of the European Union to send an election assessment team to Afghanistan. The United Kingdom encourages the Government of Afghanistan to give all election observers the access they need to the electoral process so that, when the time comes, they can provide informed reports on the process.

Thirdly, I would like to address the issue of the next steps on the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. The Framework, which was agreed in 2012, remains the blueprint for the international community's development efforts in Afghanistan. Progress in priority areas such as the role of women is essential for long-term development and to sustain donor funding. We encourage UNAMA to assist in monitoring, coordinating and reporting on progress over the coming months, as requested in the resolution we have adopted today (resolution 2145 (2014)). The United Kingdom looks forward to co-chairing, with the Afghan Government, the development conference to be held later this year, which will be an opportunity for the international community to assess progress against the Framework and set our ambitions for the future.

Finally, the United Kingdom firmly supports a strong United Nations presence in Afghanistan. The United Nations will have an essential role next year, working with the Government of Afghanistan, to lock in the gains made by the international community over the past decade. We want the United Nations to have the resources it needs to enable a country-wide presence and carry out its responsibilities in line with the mandate endorsed today. But we urge the United Nations and its agencies to work more closely together, share resources and work with NATO and other relevant organizations

to spot the opportunities and tackle the challenges of the post-2014 environment.

One of the main challenges for Afghanistan, and indeed the work of the United Nations, is human rights, specifically the rights of women and girls. Women and girls in Afghanistan continue to face huge challenges, and the gains made are fragile. We encourage the United Nations to continue working closely with the Government of Afghanistan, international partners and civil society to improve the status of women and girls.

Afghans are taking charge of their security and their democracy. Afghanistan is changing fast, with a growing economy, a young population and a revolution in access to the outside world through social media. Despite the many challenges, therefore, 2014 is a year full of opportunity for Afghanistan. We pledge to continue our support to the Government of Afghanistan as it seeks to build a more peaceful, democratic and prosperous future for all Afghans.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Mr. Ján Kubiš, and thank him for his briefing. We also welcome Ambassador Zahir Tanin and thank him for his statement.

Chile welcomes the holding of the presidential and provincial council elections on 5 April. Preparations are on track, with an existing electoral framework, a final list of presidential candidates and a functional Independent Electoral Complaints Commission.

We must stress that the efforts to promote and strengthen women's participation as voters, candidates and observers will provide a gauge of how representative the process is. The elections will be a fundamental and legitimate political transition in Afghanistan's stability. In that respect, the process must be credible, transparent, inclusive and entirely in line with the country's legal and constitutional norms.

It is important that the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) continue at all levels so as to ensure that women can participate in decision-making processes and that their needs are adequately met. The inclusion of women in the police and security forces is important and should remain a priority for the new authorities.

Chile reiterates the need to strengthen the protection of civilians and condemns the use of force

against unarmed civilians, including women and children, whether by pro- or anti-Government forces. The authorities' primary responsibility is to ensure the protection of civilians.

In addition, progress in the area of human rights is a crucial element for the stability of the country, which remains fragile. We agree with the Secretary-General in his call on the authorities to adopt any measures necessary to support the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in its crucial role.

Food insecurity, the situation of internally displaced persons and the ongoing vulnerability to natural disasters, against the backdrop of a conflict that has lasted for decades, are humanitarian challenges that need to be faced in a coordinated manner by the international community and the new authorities. That will not be possible without ensuring full, prompt and unhindered access for humanitarian personnel.

In that regard, the United Nations should continue its presence on the ground through the work of UNAMA, in the same way that the country team does in the area of development. Initiatives such as World Health Organization support to the efforts of local authorities in the fight against polio must be maintained. The conditions to achieve a transition from relief to development must also be created. The international community must provide its cooperation in such efforts.

We regret that terrorism, in all its various forms and manifestations, continues to intensify in some regions. The number of events and victims has continued to grow and is at its worst level since 2011. We condemn the terrorist attack on a restaurant in Kabul on 17 January, which took the lives of four United Nations officials and 17 Afghan civilians, and we express our condolences to the families of the victims.

Given the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force at the end of 2014, Chile believes the capabilities of the Afghan security forces to deal with the threats and challenges on the horizon should continue to be strengthened. That will mean mitigating the current uncertainty prevailing in Afghanistan. A concrete example in this general area is the approval by the consultative Loya Jirga of the bilateral security agreement with the United States. It is important that the agreement be signed to ensure that such assistance is provided and maintained and a transition to stability is achieved.

It is essential that the next Government have the stability needed for an orderly transition to be carried out. Given the uncertainty that has prevailed in Afghanistan during the last year of the transition, it is important that UNAMA's mandate be extended for 12 months, and we welcome that extension. Equally important is the need to provide the Mission with the necessary priority measures to fully discharge its duties.

In conclusion, I would like to express the support of Chile for the efforts of the Afghan people to build a democratic State based on the rule of law and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are essential for its stability and development as well as for the sustainability and development of the region of which it is a part.

Ms. Murmokaite (Lithuania): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his briefing on the situation in Afghanistan and Ambassador Tanin for his remarks.

Like others before me, I would like to extend my delegation's condolences over the tragic loss of lives of United Nations family members and all other victims of the brutal attack on 17 January in Kabul. We pay tribute to the dedication of all international staff facing continuous security challenges and risking their lives for the sake of the people of Afghanistan.

Lithuania is firmly committed to contributing to building a peaceful and stable future of Afghanistan. Since 2005, we have been leading a provincial reconstruction team in Chaghcharan, the provincial capital of Ghor. Our goal of assisting the Afghan people in building a secure, democratic, inclusive and self-sufficient Afghanistan remains unchanged.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement to be made later in this meeting by the observer of the European Union (EU).

This year, Afghanistan stands at a critical milestone. The presidential elections scheduled for 5 April will see power transferred from one elected president to another for the first time in the history of Afghanistan. We welcome the advancements in the electoral process made through the timely adoption of legal framework, the functioning of established electoral bodies, the declared non-interference by the Government, the vigorous political campaigning and the enhanced public outreach throughout the country.

An important development of the campaign is the progress in ensuring female participation in the upcoming election, with 35 percent of new voter registration cards being distributed to female voters. In addition, 13,000 women searchers were trained to work in polling centres on election day.

We also salute women candidates for the position of Vice-President, as well as over 100 women provincial council candidates. Ensuring the safety of women candidates and voters is key to ensuring that the outcome of the election represents the will of the entire nation and engages the full potential of Afghanistan's women in building its future. Security during campaigning and on the day of voting remains a major concern and must be addressed with all due seriousness.

The support of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to Afghan-led elections that live up to inclusiveness, transparency, credibility and legitimacy standards is of critical importance. We welcome the fact that Afghan authorities are encouraging observation of the election, including by international observers and the invitation extended to European Union and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe observer teams.

The limited progress towards the establishment of a peace process with the armed opposition continues to be an issue of concern. We stress the importance of an inclusive Afghan-led process and we call on UNAMA to continue to facilitate local dialogue on reconciliation. UNAMA initiatives aimed at mitigating inter-ethnic and inter-tribal tensions and linking Government officials, community leaders, religious scholars and civil society, including women, are welcomed and need to continue.

Serious concerns remain about the security situation in the country. The gradual withdrawal of international troops has left Afghan Government forces more vulnerable to attacks by insurgents. Due to the rise in casualties, 2013 was the second most violent year since the fall of the Taliban regime. The secure functioning of UNAMA, especially that of its field offices, is also directly impacted by the withdrawal of international forces.

Armed clashes and improvised explosive devices account for 75 per cent of deaths. It is particularly troubling that casualties among children increased by more than one third as compared to those in 2009. About three fourths of the death toll is attributed to the

Taliban. Reduced civilian suffering and fewer civilian casualties, together with improvements in human rights protection, should be the core principles of improved stability and security for Afghanistan in 2014. My delegation would support tracking civilian casualties disaggregated by gender.

The anti-Government elements targeting Government institutions and the international community is totally unacceptable. The efforts by Afghan forces to counter such attacks are crucial. Having further international assistance in support of the Afghan army and police forces will remain essential. Lithuania has pledged to contribute its support to the Afghan National Security Forces with a new training mission after 2014, once the necessary legal framework is in place. As an International Security Assistance Force country, we encourage our Afghan partners to finalize the conclusion of the NATO status-of-forces agreement as soon as possible.

The progress made by Afghanistan in improving the human rights situation remains fragile. We urge the Afghan Government to take the necessary steps to support the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission so that it can fulfil its critical role.

Violence against women in particular reached record levels in 2013, according to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. A major concern is the failure to enforce the law on the elimination of violence against women, which leaves perpetrators at large. Too many victims of violence keep silent for fear of reprisals. We commend the decision of President Karzai not to sign the current draft criminal procedure code into law, as it would limit women's rights to seek justice. UNAMA must continue its work in identifying the challenges as well as remedies regarding national and international efforts to advance women's rights and women's participation in the political, economic and social life of the country.

Attacks on schools, teachers and students continued unabated by the Taliban and other armed groups. Such violence is interfering with access to education, and in some areas actually rolled back progress already made.

A particular point of concern for my delegation is the 36 per cent increase in opium cultivation in 2013. Given the nexus between drug trafficking, arms, violence and terrorism, we stress the importance of more resolute measures and Afghan initiatives aimed at accelerating counter-narcotics policies by including the

implementation of a National Drug Control Strategy, as well as efforts aimed at addressing the flourishing illicit economy and corruption. In all of that, UNAMA has an important role to play.

Strengthening Afghanistan's regional ties is vital for its long-term stability. Active Afghan leadership within the Istanbul Process and bilateral steps to engage with neighbouring countries, including increased recognition of shared interests with Pakistan, is welcomed by my delegation.

Lithuania is committed to the long-term development of Afghanistan through the EU and bilateral development projects focusing on good governance, capacity-building and infrastructure. UNAMA has a vital role in ensuring effective coordination of donor assistance, especially implementing mutual commitments made at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan in 2012 through the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

In conclusion, the UNAMA presence in Afghanistan is perceived by the Afghan people as an overall stability factor and an indication of long-term commitment by the international community. The United Nations must continue its presence in Afghanistan to ensure that the gains of more than a decade are not lost and all sacrifices were not in vain. We welcome the UNAMA mandate extension and call for its implementation, especially in its field presence, with determination. Assisting Afghans in the challenging transformation decade is our responsibility.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his briefing and the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Mr. Tanin, for his statement.

This year represents a crucial year of transition for Afghanistan, during which it will undergo a three-pronged transition — on political, security and economic fronts — to comprehensively build on Afghanistan's stability, prosperity and harmonious coexistence among various communities. Those transitions will require unremitting efforts on the part of the Afghan Government and its people, which would not be possible without the persistent support and assistance from the international community.

The presidential and provincial council elections slated for 5 April represent an important milestone in Afghanistan's political transition. China welcomes the

smooth progress in the preparations for the upcoming major elections and wishes for their success in leading to smooth transitions that are in keeping with the common interest of Afghanistan and the international community.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains fragile, as represented by the major increases in various types of security incidents since last year. We express our concerns over rising civilian casualties, and we support capacity-building for Afghanistan's national security and police forces to enable them to effectively fulfil safety and security responsibilities. The parties concerned should fully take into account the need to protect the security and stability of Afghanistan and steadily and responsibly reduce their armed forces in order to ensure smooth progress in Afghanistan's security transition.

China supports the efforts of the Afghan Government and of the High Peace Council to promote an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process. We hope that the international community will help Afghanistan to advance the reconciliation process on its own terms, and we welcome the neighbours of that country playing an active role.

China highly appreciates the efforts of the Afghan Government to develop its economy and to promote employment. We expect the international community to effectively fulfil its assistance commitments by giving top priority to helping Afghanistan to implement its national development strategy, thereby enabling Afghanistan to achieve economic and social development and to gradually eliminate conditions that favour terrorism, drug production, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

Afghanistan's peace, reconstruction and long-term security are closely linked to regional peace and stability. China supports Afghanistan's efforts to participate more actively in regional cooperation and to enhance mutual trust and good-neighbourly relations with countries in the region on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefits. We encourage Afghanistan to make better use of the various regional mechanisms, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in a common effort to address the many regional security threats and challenges.

We support the United Nations in continuing to play an important role in coordinating international assistance to build peace in Afghanistan. We welcome

resolution 2145 (2014), adopted earlier this morning, which renews UNAMA's mandate. China supports providing adequate funding for the Mission to implement its mandate. We hope that UNAMA will strengthen its cooperation with the Afghan Government, fulfil its responsibilities under the Council's mandate, effectively coordinate international assistance and strengthen the international community's confidence in Afghanistan's smooth transition and transformation. China supports the efforts of the international community and of the Afghan Government to explore ways to make better use of UNAMA's post-2014 role, in line with the evolving situation in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is an important neighbour of China. We look forward to a friendly, unified, stable and developed Afghanistan. We always respect that country's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and the path of development chosen by its people, in line with its circumstances. China has long participated actively in rebuilding peace in Afghanistan by providing assistance to the best of its ability. In August, for the first time China will host the Foreign Ministers Conference on the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan. Through that meeting, China hopes to garner consensus in our common effort to support the long-term transition of Afghanistan and to promote regional peace and stability.

China stands ready to work with the international community in playing a constructive role in helping Afghanistan to achieve early political reconciliation and economic revitalization and to embark upon a path towards lasting peace and sustainable development.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General and Special Representative Mr. Ján Kubiš for the detailed report (S/2014/163) on developments in the situation in Afghanistan since the end of 2013. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations for his statement.

Chad's vote in favour of resolution 2145 (2014) to renew the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is a vote of encouragement, as we note with satisfaction the political, economic and human rights developments with the establishment of the Kabul process. We are also encouraged by progress on integration, regional cooperation and human rights, as well as the improved coordination and conditions for humanitarian assistance thanks to the Mission's support.

We call on all the parties concerned to commit themselves, in a spirit of conciliation and reconciliation, to restoring and strengthening peace in Afghanistan. We also welcome the inclusive direct talks involving all stakeholders, namely, politicians, traditional community leaders, religious scholars and civil society, towards the restoration of peace in Afghanistan. We think that the elections due to be held in April will help to further stabilize the country.

However, we are very concerned about the recent security situation in Afghanistan, given the significantly increased number of incidents in 2013, including the killing of four UNAMA staff members in January. In that regard, Chad calls for respect of human rights, in particular international humanitarian law, which protects civilian populations in armed conflicts. Particular attention should be paid to the situation of children and women and other vulnerable people, who often find themselves victims of incidents involving anti-personnel mines. We are very concerned about the increase in the trafficking in drugs and other narcotics, which has a negative impact on the international security situation, as was the case in Mali, where the situation deteriorated with the rise in criminal networks and funding for international terrorism.

Chad encourages Afghanistan's neighbouring States to continue to cooperate in the transnational fight against drug and arms trafficking. Chad support UNAMA and the work of the international community aimed at finding a political solution to the crisis and joins the Secretary-General's call for increased humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations.

Finally, we condemn armed groups that recruit child soldiers and commit violence against women. The perpetrators of such crimes should be prosecuted and brought to justice. In conclusion, we support the United Nations staff in Afghanistan, in particular Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Ján Kubiš, for all their ongoing efforts for the Afghan people.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan)
(*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, for his briefing. I also thank the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for their sacrifice in very dangerous circumstances. I would also like to thank the representative of Afghanistan for his comprehensive statement.

Jordan is concerned about the volatile security situation in Afghanistan and the increased number of civilian victims, in particular women and children. We strongly condemn all terrorist attacks on staff of the various United Nations organizations present in Afghanistan and those that target civilians and Afghan security forces. We extend our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to the people and Government of Afghanistan and the States whose nationals died in those attacks. Jordan calls on States and the entire international community to continue to provide support and assistance to the Afghan Government in the fight against terrorism and in de-mining activities, not to mention the elimination of explosive remnants of war. We must meet our international commitments and provide assistance to Afghanistan.

Jordan contributes to international efforts seeking to establish a favourable environment for Afghanistan's security, stability and development and to rebuilding the State on the basis of our commitment to actively participate in peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance efforts. We have a duty to oppose any attempt to take hostage the great religion of Islam, distort its image or misrepresent its content. Islam calls for tolerance and dialogue, respect for human dignity and security.

Afghanistan is on the threshold of historic elections. We hope that they will strengthen the capacities of the stakeholders to deal with the numerous challenges that the country faces. In that regard, we welcome the ongoing preparatory work for the elections, which are on the right track and which we hope will take place next month in accordance with Afghanistan's legal and constitutional framework.

We are encouraged by the intensive political activity within all political parties in the country. We are also encouraged by the peaceful political statements made by all of the candidates. We would call upon the Special Representative to continue his meetings with the stakeholders in order to ensure the integrity, inclusiveness and fairness of the electoral process.

Jordan welcomes the reform efforts undertaken by the Afghan Government, including the measures being taken in the area of human rights, particularly the fight against violence against women. We reiterate the need for the Afghan Government to pursue its efforts to strengthen human rights and the rule of law.

At the end of the year, Afghanistan will come to a new crossroads. The international community's message to Afghanistan under those circumstances should be clear, namely, that the Afghan Government and people will be able to count on the assistance of the international community. We must strengthen the role of the United Nations and deepen our partnership with Afghanistan. None of us can countenance the effects of a return to the past or a reversal of the accomplishments made in the country to date.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): We welcome Mr. Ján Kubiš to the Security Council once again and thank him for his briefing. We also thank Ambassador Tanin for his remarks today.

To begin, I want to extend my Government's condolences to the families and friends of the United Nations personnel who, on 17 January, were killed by a suicide bomber at a restaurant in Kabul. That attack also claimed the lives of three United States citizens and the local representative of the International Monetary Fund. The tragedy reminds us of the need to recognize and support the many dedicated men and women from the United Nations and other international organizations, international civil society and coalition military forces who work every day to support the Afghan people as they strive to build a more peaceful, democratic and prosperous homeland.

On 5 April, Afghan citizens will head to the polls, at a time of both rising promise and ongoing challenges. That historic balloting can pave the way for Afghanistan's first peaceful and democratic transfer of political authority from one Head of State to another.

One of the best ways to ensure the credibility of the elections is through independent monitoring. To that end, more than 12,000 Afghan observers are expected to have a role in verifying the integrity of the process. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) is also inviting international observers. We encourage the IEC and the Afghan National Security Forces to do all they can to ensure access for voters, observers and party representatives to all polling centres, including those in remote and high-risk areas.

In particular, we call on all authorities to ensure that women are able to participate as voters, candidates, observers and election officials in a meaningful way. Credible, transparent and inclusive elections will pave the way to democratic progress in Afghanistan. A successful transfer of presidential power this year

following democratic elections will solidify the gains made over the past 12 years and contribute much to the country's future development and stability. It will also show all Afghans, including the Taliban, that the rule of law matters and that Afghanistan's constitutional system is resilient enough to overcome grave obstacles.

For its part, the United States Government will provide nearly \$100 million to facilitate the April elections through a variety of programmes, including monitoring and observation. I emphasize that my Government strongly supports the democratic process but that we neither favour nor oppose any particular candidate. It is up to the Afghan people, and only the Afghan people, to choose their leaders.

This morning, the United States was pleased to join the Security Council in extending the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for another year, with its core mandate intact. That renewal will enable the Mission to meet the challenges of the ongoing transition period, particularly through support for the political process and regional diplomacy, coordinating humanitarian and other assistance, human rights monitoring, institution-building and capacity development.

Of course, UNAMA's support alone cannot guarantee success. The international community as a whole has made a long-term commitment to Afghanistan. My Government welcomes the engagement of the Heart of Asia countries, including their effort to further integrate Afghanistan's economy through the Istanbul Process. Regional support will also be critical in supporting Afghanistan's democratic transition and Afghan-led efforts at internal reconciliation.

We should be under no illusions. Serious security threats remain in Afghanistan, including attacks by extremist elements against humanitarian aid workers and other Afghan and international civilian personnel. We deplore such attacks, which are wholly destructive in purpose and clearly contrary to the well-being of the Afghan people. We call upon all parties to join in condemning those crimes, seeking accountability for them and striving to prevent them. The citizens of Afghanistan deserve to live in safety, with full and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance, including food, shelter, health services and emergency trauma care.

Over the past dozen years, Afghanistan has been the scene of incredible turbulence, a drama touched by

tragedy but held aloft by hope. The country now stands on the threshold of a historic election, facing great challenges and yet bolstered by the productive energy of a population that is eager to build a more democratic and prosperous future. The United Nations should be proud of the role it has played in helping the Afghan people to lay the groundwork for such a future, and we should be determined to continue that vital effort in the months and years to come.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are very grateful to Mr. Ján Kubiš for his briefing on the situation in Afghanistan and for presenting the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/163). We are also grateful for Mr. Tanin's presentation.

We support the efforts of the Afghan leadership to continue moving the country on the path of peace, stability, development and broad cooperation with neighbours in the region. We pay tribute to efforts by the Afghans themselves to try, in the face of various challenges, to determine their future and take responsibility for their development and security. We hope that at this crucial turning point in the history of the country the people and society will be able to mobilize their efforts and come together to fulfil constructive objectives in the interest of all, respecting human rights, fairness and harmony.

The situation in Afghanistan has been worsening and it has remained at the centre of the attention of the international community, especially since the country is nearing critical milestones, namely, presidential elections and the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Those factors will, to a large extent, determine the dynamics for the unfolding of the situation, not only in Afghanistan but in the region as a whole.

In this crucial period, we need a comprehensive analysis of the risks and threats that stand in Afghanistan's way. We cannot but note that the report before us today does not mention many of the challenges that the country faces, such as the Taliban and Al-Qaida — which is not mentioned in the report, as if Al-Qaida was not present in the country at all — and other terrorist groups. Their aggressive activity is a factor in the significant increase in number of civilian casualties and deaths among Afghan security forces. Armed opposition has strengthened in various regions, particularly in areas previously under

the full control of the Government. The situation in the south and east of the country is deteriorating. That is confirmed by the armed attack on the Afghan National Army base in Kunar province mentioned in the report, the bold abduction by Taliban extremists of residents in Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces for supporting the Government and the increased number of deaths among peaceful individuals in Helmand province. Increasing terrorist activity in the north and north-east is especially alarming, as the armed opposition there has more than 10,000 fighters.

We cannot agree with the report's assessment of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. It is not at all limited to remote and mountainous regions. It has been active outside of Afghanistan's borders, as confirmed by the killing of three Turkmen border guards near the border between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. Just three years ago, the northern region of Afghanistan was calm.

We are highly concerned about the situation that could develop in Central Asia after the withdrawal of ISAF. We have seen increasing numbers of attacks on foreigners, particularly United Nations staff. The terrorist attack in January in Kabul that led to the deaths of 20 people, including the Russian representative at the mission, confirmed that the Taliban believe they can act with impunity. The latest incident — the killing of a journalist in the capital on 11 March — is another example.

Bearing that in mind, it is our belief that certain people continue to convince themselves that the situation is fine, especially given that the insurgents have demonstrated their destructive potential in the run-up to the elections.

The Russian Federation is closely monitoring the electoral process. It is of serious concern that, on 10 March, an appeal was published on the Taliban website, urging the citizens of Afghanistan to avoid participating in the electoral process, because any such participation would be considered as efforts to assist the occupation forces.

A legitimate question therefore arises: To what extent is the forced transfer of responsibility conducted in the country, from the international military force to the Afghan forces justified? And to what extent is the artificial withdrawal timetable justified? To what extent has the coalition fulfilled the Council's mandate in terms of stabilization and security and preparing effective Afghan law enforcement and security forces?

That will require NATO to provide an objective status report to the Security Council at the end of the year.

It is our belief that, if Kabul agrees to NATO's further presence after 2014, it must be based on an international legal framework in the form of a Security Council resolution. After stabilization tasks have been achieved, there will no further need for foreign military contingents in Afghanistan. Efforts to address that issue should focus on ensuring that Afghan citizens and military personnel do not lose their lives as a result of erroneous air strikes by ISAF. The most recent such error took place in Logar province, killing five people and injuring eight.

There is no doubt that opium production, which has increased by 150 per cent, has contributed to extremist activity. The number of drug addicts has increased by 1 million, among which there are 300,000 children. The fight against illicit drug manufacturing — which represents a threat to peace and stability not only in Afghanistan, but at regional and international levels — requires collective efforts. It is not possible to pretend that is not a problem, simply by indicating the lack of a specific mandate under ISAF.

Areas of cooperation must be defined among NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), aimed at illicit drug trafficking. The CSTO has significant experience in combating drug trafficking, and such efforts against that scourge would be more effective in cooperation with NATO. Even a modest reduction in drug trafficking activity would represent a major achievement by the international community.

Russia fully supports the efforts of the Afghan Government to support national reconciliation. Those efforts should be headed by the Kabul Government and based on three principles, that is, insurgents must lay down their weapons, acknowledge Afghanistan's Constitution and completely renounce relations with Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations.

It is clear that, as foreign forces draw down from Afghanistan and Afghan security forces gain strength, the motivation of the armed opposition will weaken. The history of the Qatari office that was temporarily closed by the Taliban is a good example. Bearing that in mind, it might be possible to weaken the Council's sanctions against the Taliban under certain conditions.

The Russian Federation considers it important to strengthen regional cooperation in contributing

to the development of Afghanistan as a peaceful, economically developed State. The best platform for that is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which represents nearly all of the countries of the region, including Afghanistan.

Similarly, we do not consider justified what has been noted about the Istanbul Process and its high marks. Its added value has not yet been confirmed and the working group format it is following has not proved very effective. Also, there has been a lack of interest on the part of the States parties. In our view, that process simply represents a platform for international dialogue to generate innovative ideas.

The stabilization of Afghanistan will achieve firm results only through the collective efforts of all actors, which must be effectively coordinated in order to maximize results. In that respect, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan will make an essential contribution. Its role, as the foreign military contingents withdraw, will only increase, as resolution 2145 (2014), adopted today, confirms.

Russia is ready to continue to develop regional cooperation in the interests of Afghanistan in those areas that could provide real benefits to the country. We are open to engaging in partnership with all interested States in the implementation of projects of interest to Afghanistan.

The Russian Federation continues to provide humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. We anticipate that coordinated regional efforts to implement the commitments made by the international community will contribute to the sustainable development of the country and the well-being of its citizens, as well as help to re-establish a peaceful Afghanistan that is free of terrorism and drug-related crime.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate our Afghan colleagues in the light of the upcoming holiday of Nowruz and to wish them a good year.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Luxembourg.

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his briefing and his work as the Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I also thank the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, for his statement.

I align myself with the statement to be made during the debate by the observer of the European Union.

At the outset, I would like to express my condolences and sympathy to the family members of the victims of the terrorist attack on 17 January in Kabul. I would also dedicate special thoughts to the four members of UNAMA who lost their lives during that cowardly and senseless attack. They deserve more than our thanks, more than our gratitude. They deserve our admiration for having served in the cause of peace and the cause of the United Nations.

The tribute I pay to them today is also addressed to all of the staff members of UNAMA who are carrying out outstanding work on the Council's behalf to serve the Organization and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Violence and insecurity, uncertainty about the future — the Afghan people face those issues each day. The UNAMA report of 8 February on the human cost of conflict in relation to civilians speaks volumes of the sufferings endured by the population. In reading the numbers of victims and the growing proportion of women and children among them, we realize that one of the major challenges still to be met is that of security, in particular the security of civilians, beginning with the security of voters and candidates in the presidential and provincial elections to be held on 5 April.

As an election is meaningful only if all voters are able to freely go to the polling stations and if the candidates are able to conduct their campaigns without risking their lives or being subject to threats, we urge that no effort be spared to establish an adequate security framework. We reiterate the importance we attach to the framework's being applied to everyone, including specifically to women. Luxembourg believes that the degree of women's participation will be one of the benchmarks against which we can measure the success of the voting and the credibility of the results. The Independent Election Commission and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission will also have a central role to play guaranteeing that the elections are peaceful, transparent, credible, inclusive and fair.

Although the path leading to the elections of 5 April is still fraught with pitfalls, the very fact that those elections are taking place is in itself a remarkable success. But as important as the elections may be, they are only one step; they are not the end of a process. The pacification and stabilization of the country will also

depend upon the progress that the new leaders will be able to achieve in several key areas. We would like to underscore at least three.

First is respect for human rights. No society can rebuild itself if it allows impunity, injustice and the law of the jungle to take root. That is why it is important that the Afghan authorities allow the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission to effectively play its role as a free and independent institution. Therefore, in accordance with the commitments made under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, women's rights must be genuinely and fully recognized, and the law against violence against women must be genuinely and fully implemented.

That is also why, as mentioned by the Special Representative, we encourage the Afghan authorities to redouble their efforts to implement the action plan to halt the use and recruitment of children in the Afghan National Security Forces, which they signed on 30 January 2011 with the United Nations. We believe, moreover, that it would be desirable that the section of the Secretary-General's report dealing with the plight of children in armed conflict contain information on all the violations and abuses committed against children in Afghanistan and on the state of the implementation of the action plan.

The second key area for bringing peace and stability to the country is the fight against poverty. Too many Afghans still live below the poverty line. We do not have the right to ignore that situation or to accept it. It is intolerable on a human level; it is disastrous for the country's stability. It will be up to the newly elected leaders to address the question of how to proceed to a more equitable distribution of resources. But it will also be up to the international community to accord all the required attention to that aspect when designing its aid programmes for the Afghan people for the post-2014 period.

In that context, I would like to mention that in February the European Union and Afghanistan signed an agreement that marks the completion of bilateral negotiations for Afghanistan's membership in the World Trade Organization. That membership should eventually make a sustainable contribution to the process of stabilization, economic reform and sustainable development begun by the Afghan authorities.

The third key area has to do with the lifting of the uncertainty with regard to the international presence

beginning on 1 January 2015, after the transitional period. On several occasions, the international community has reaffirmed its willingness to remain engaged with the Afghan people. In return, it is crucial to remove any uncertainty with regard to the framework for future international missions, including support missions for the Afghan security forces.

In conclusion, I welcome the adoption of resolution 2145 (2014) in the context of this debate, which renews the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan until 17 March 2015. I thank our Australian colleagues, who led the negotiations on that important text. In our view, after 2014 UNAMA will be called upon to continue playing the important supporting role that it has had so far. To do that, it is essential that UNAMA have adequate means to maintain its presence on the ground in Afghanistan's provinces and among the Afghan people.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Mukerji (India): At the outset, Madam President, let me thank you for organizing today's debate on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš, and Ambassador Tanin for their briefings.

While the text of my statement is being circulated, I will, in the interests of time, make a shorter presentation.

Let me begin by paying tribute to the former first Vice-President of Afghanistan, Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim, who passed away on 9 March. His contribution to fighting the forces of terrorism and extremism and to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan will always be remembered. Mohammed Qasim Fahim was also a close friend of India and made personal contributions to nurturing and strengthening the India-Afghanistan strategic partnership. The Vice-President of India led the Indian delegation to his funeral.

I would also like to pay tribute to the four members of the United Nations family who lost their lives on 17 January in the ghastly attack in a restaurant in Kabul. We condemn that barbaric act, which was perpetrated by the Taliban. On 13 March, a suicide bomber, whose target was the Indian Consulate in Kandahar, was killed

by Afghan security forces just outside the Consulate building, preventing a major terrorist act.

The presidential election, which is scheduled for 5 April 2014, is the most important upcoming event in the political transition of Afghanistan. We should look for an election process that has credibility with the Afghan people and culminates in the choice of an Afghan President who is acceptable to all Afghans. We note that numerous election rallies and meetings are being organized across Afghanistan, and we applaud the Afghan people's confidence and their desire to participate in free and fair elections.

On the security situation, we note with distress the mention in the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/163) that provinces in the east and south of Afghanistan faced intensified attacks from an array of groups, including from Tehrik-e Taliban, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, in addition to the Afghan Taliban. Our assessment is that intimidation in the southern and eastern parts of the country is a threat to smooth elections.

We want to stress the fact that terrorism, which emanates from beyond Afghanistan's borders, is the main threat to Afghanistan's security and stability. It is that terrorism that promotes terrorist activities against Afghan interests, as well as against friends of Afghanistan, like India. It is unfortunate that terrorist sanctuaries and safe havens and the financial and tactical support structures for terrorism still exist.

It is necessary to demystify the notion that the problem in Afghanistan is one of rivalry among various ethnic or tribal groups. The real problem is that Afghanistan continues to face terrorism, which seeks to erode the efforts of Afghanistan and its friends to reconstruct the socioeconomic fabric of the country. We need to look at the sources of insecurity and violence in Afghanistan. We stand firmly with Afghanistan in confronting the threat and challenge posed by terrorism.

Turning to the reconciliation process, we believe that it must remain Afghan led, Afghan owned and Afghan controlled, while respecting the agreed red lines. We do not endorse any effort to treat the Government of Afghanistan on par with the Taliban. We have always maintained that the success of economic transition in Afghanistan is as crucial as the success of political and security transitions. It is the view of my delegation that the mandate of UNAMA should be to support the political institutions of Afghanistan, besides

mobilizing international focus on the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

We believe that UNAMA should also harness its strength in the humanitarian and developmental work, where its ability to reach the remotest corner of Afghanistan is well proven. UNAMA should concentrate on capacity-building. In that regard, we would like to assure the Council of India's fullest cooperation.

We note the important references in the resolution adopted today by the Council (resolution 2145 (2014)) on UNAMA to the major processes that underpin the attempt by the international community to support Afghanistan. At the regional level, we would like to draw the attention of the Council to the senior officials' meeting under the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan held in New Delhi on 17 January and the visit of the Minister of External Affairs of India to Kandahar on 15 February to inaugurate, with President Karzai, the Afghanistan National Agricultural Sciences and Technology University.

Those recent events are part of India's long-established policy of, and commitment to, assisting the people and Government of Afghanistan as they build a peaceful, pluralistic, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan. India does not have the luxury of an exit strategy in Afghanistan, which shares a civilizational linkage with India.

We do not share the negativity and pessimism portrayed about the future of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is going through political, security and economic transitions at the same time. The uncertainties associated with the transitions pose real challenges. The progress that has been achieved by the people and Government of Afghanistan in the past 12 years in the social, political and economic spheres has taught us that, with sustained support from the international community, Afghanistan can successfully overcome those challenges.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that, at this critical juncture of transition and transformation, we want to express our full support to the political, social and economic transition taking place in Afghanistan. We would like to convey, a few days before Nowruz, our best wishes to the people of Afghanistan for the upcoming electoral process and would like to assure

them of the sincere support of the Government and people of India.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Cardì (Italy): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2014/163), Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

I would also express Italy's condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack on 17 January in Kabul.

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union, and I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Italy wishes to express its satisfaction over the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which is a pillar of the international civilian presence in Afghanistan and a fundamental contribution to the development and stabilization of the country. UNAMA has made a remarkable contribution in accompanying Afghanistan on its road to growth, human rights protection and institutional strengthening. We greatly appreciate the generous efforts of the women and men of UNAMA to bring assistance to the Afghan people, under the commendable leadership of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Afghanistan.

Between now and the end of 2014, Afghanistan has to meet a series of crucial appointments. The election will mark the first time in the country's history of a turnover from one Head of State to another through a democratic process, and the completion of the transitional process will pave the way for the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force and for NATO mission Resolute Support.

It is vital that the electoral process, from start to finish, be regular, leading to the proclamation of the new Head of State. Acceptance of the result by the defeated parties and public opinion will depend on the perception that the electoral process has been legitimate, credible, transparent and inclusive — consequently, so will a peaceful and seamless political transition. To that end, the United Nations should also dedicate its support to continue aiding the country on its path to civil and economic development.

The proper and orderly holding of the presidential and provincial elections will have to contend firmly

with the security factor. That is the responsibility of the Afghan National Security Forces, which are making constant progress in the difficult daily challenge of controlling the territory. Unfortunately, terrorist assassination attempts and attacks define everyday life in Afghanistan — a circumstance that means we cannot lower our guard and that the road to the final stabilization of the country will require more time.

On the completion of the transition process, it is of fundamental importance that Afghanistan and the United States sign the bilateral security agreement in the near term, since the delay is having a clear impact on planning NATO's future presence in Afghanistan.

Italy reaffirms its conviction that, until there is reconciliation within Afghanistan, there will be no prospects for stabilization, nor will any stabilization last without the contribution of the other regional stakeholders. Italy therefore confirms its support for the peace process, recognizing the full ownership of Afghanistan. In doing so we also voice our expectation that there will be no backtracking in the area of democratic gains and civil and gender rights, or yielding to terrorism.

It is essential not to lower ambitions or to sacrifice the quality and quantity of the benchmarks the Kabul authorities are called on to respect. We therefore expect our Afghan friends to honour the legacy of Tokyo and to achieve certain and measurable results in areas such as the democratic and electoral process, the fight against corruption, administrative and economic governance and human rights. That is another reason that Italy so appreciates the important space that the resolution just adopted (resolution 2145 (2014)) dedicates to those aspects, in particular the protection of human rights.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I wish to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his comprehensive briefing. I also thank Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan for his statement.

I would first like to express my deepest condolences to the Government and people of Afghanistan for the great loss of their first Vice-President, Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim. His exceptional contribution to the reconstruction of Afghanistan will be remembered.

I am particularly gratified to address the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan because I have been personally involved in Japan's efforts to help create stability and development in that beautiful country since the 1990s, and in particular since the Tokyo Conference on Consolidation of Peace in Afghanistan, held in January 2002.

Japan welcomes today's adoption of resolution 2145 (2014) renewing the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for another 12 months. In this time of uncertainty, the continuous presence of UNAMA is crucial. I would like also to emphasize the importance of ensuring adequate resources for UNAMA to efficiently support Afghanistan on its path towards peace and stability.

The year 2014 is one of historical significance for the people of Afghanistan, as the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) will be completed and the country will experience the election of its second President. Today, I would like to touch upon, first, the elections; secondly, the challenges that must be addressed by the future Government; and, finally, Japan's commitment to Afghanistan.

First, on the elections, for the long-term stability of Afghanistan, it is of the utmost importance that the upcoming presidential and provincial council elections lend strong legitimacy to the new Government through a credible and inclusive election process. I reiterate the importance of holding the elections without delay on 5 April, in accordance with the Afghan Constitution. In that regard, I commend the tireless efforts of the Government and the electoral management bodies of Afghanistan to keep the technical preparations on track. Japan has made financial contributions through the United Nations Development Programme in order to have a positive impact on the process. I call on all eligible citizens of Afghanistan to participate in these elections of crucial importance to deciding their own future.

Secondly, I would like to touch upon what we would like to see from Afghanistan, in particular from the future Government that will take over the responsibilities of President Karzai to lead the country towards long-term stability. On that subject, I welcome the participation of the presidential candidates at the special Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board meeting that was held on 29 January. Since all the candidates have been active in the political life of

Afghanistan since 2001, I am confident that they all understand very well the spirit of partnership that exists between the Afghan Government and the international community. Even so, it was important for us to know that the candidates recognize their responsibilities to implement the commitments under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework.

Ensuring economic stability is a matter of urgency for the Government of Afghanistan. In order to achieve that goal, the new Government will have to immediately grapple with a variety of legislative and institutional reforms necessary for increasing annual revenue, reducing the rapidly expanding illicit economy and developing industry. We look forward to seeing tangible results before the ministerial meeting to be co-hosted by Afghanistan and the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, recognizing that reconciliation is the only way to achieve lasting peace in Afghanistan, the future Government must continue to call on the Taliban to join the peace process. Japan supports the Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process. For the sake of lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan, continuous efforts by the country's leadership and the constructive engagement of neighbouring countries are indispensable. The increased dialogue between Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, is encouraging in that regard.

Concerning the security situation, in 2013 we witnessed a sharp increase in insurgent attacks and civilian casualties. A further deterioration in the security situation will inevitably have a negative impact not only on Afghanistan's economic and social activities, but also on the implementation of our assistance. Security is also vital to encourage the full participation of all eligible voters, especially female voters, in the upcoming elections. One of the most crucial responsibilities of the Afghan Government is to continue building the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces and ensuring the necessary security arrangements, in close cooperation with its international partners.

Finally, let me say a few words on Japan's commitment to Afghanistan. Since January 2002, when we hosted the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan in Tokyo, we have contributed more than \$5 billion to Afghanistan for its developments efforts. Japan's contribution covers a wide range of areas. For example, we have

provided 30 per cent of the total salary of the Afghan National Police and have built or renovated more than 820 schools all over the country.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Japan's commitment to stand by the Government and people of Afghanistan in their endeavour for long-term stability.

The President (spoke in French): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its States members. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I would first like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2014/163), as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing in the Council today.

The coming months and the upcoming elections will be critical for Afghanistan, as the country needs to safeguard the progress made over the past 12 years. That will be the platform from which it can then move towards the goal of self-sustainability. The United Nations has played a critical role in the progress made, and I would like to commend the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General personally for their continued support for the people of Afghanistan. The challenges have also been outlined in the statement by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for which I would like to thank him.

Afghanistan will continue to depend upon financial assistance from the international community for some time. With the transition to full Afghan control to be completed by the end of this year and a reduced international presence, the role of UNAMA will be even more critical in ensuring the effective coordination of donor assistance. UNAMA has a vital role to play in enabling the Government of Afghanistan and the

international community to work together to fulfil the mutual commitments made at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan in 2012.

The importance of strengthening and safeguarding the gains made on human rights, women's rights and the rule of law for the Afghan people cannot be overstated. While there have been real improvements in the lives of Afghan women and children, due to improvements seen in health and education, much more still needs to be done especially to implement the statutory protection for women's rights, in order to enable Afghan women to play a more substantial role in Afghan society. The European Union welcomes UNAMA's work in that regard, in fulfilment of its mandate, particularly in promoting the rights of women and children.

The upcoming elections are the most immediate priority in Afghanistan. The European Union condemns the recent killings of journalists in Afghanistan. Safety and security for the media is a crucial part of the elections and, indeed, of democracy. The elections offer the opportunity for the first democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history. The European Union welcomes the spirit in which the campaign has so far been conducted. Of course, much of the focus has been on the presidential election, but it is worth recalling that the provincial council elections are also vitally important to embedding democracy across the country. The European Union hopes that the successful candidates will better reflect the Afghan population, in particular that the number of women representatives will increase.

Following the invitation issued by Afghan authorities to the European Union to observe the 5 April elections, I am pleased to confirm that the European Union has already deployed an election assessment team. The team of 15 international experts is being led by Thijs Berman, a member of the European Parliament, and is based in Kabul.

The elections are vitally important, but they are also a further step on the longer journey of firmly establishing democracy in Afghanistan. Next year, there will be parliamentary elections, with further elections to follow in subsequent years. Viable and capable electoral institutions and infrastructure are a prerequisite for holding credible, inclusive, transparent and legitimate elections, now and in the future. In our view, therefore, the UNAMA mandate should include a clear commitment to continued political and technical

support to elections in order to strengthen Afghan leadership and ownership of the electoral processes and to ensure that elections accurately reflect the will of the Afghan people.

We would like to conclude by reiterating that the international community should remain strongly committed to progress in Afghanistan for the long term. On our side, we will remain firmly focused on supporting the people of Afghanistan to help them achieve their aspirations. Our goal continues to be the emergence of a fully self-reliant, peaceful, democratic and prosperous society for the benefit of all Afghans.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Ružička (Slovakia): Thank you very much, Madam President, for this opportunity to participate in the debate of the Security Council on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Let me assure you of my delegation's support for your leadership in our deliberations.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2014/163), and the Special Representative for his briefing. I believe this is an appropriate moment to express appreciation for the work of His Excellency Mr. Zahir Tanin in his relentless diplomatic efforts and wisdom in many areas contributing to better understanding and stability in Afghanistan.

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the observer of the European Union. In my national capacity, allow me to briefly make a few comments on some important elements of the current situation in Afghanistan with regard to the following challenges.

Overall security remains the most important precondition for continued development in Afghanistan — political, economic and cultural. In that regard, the Slovak Republic strongly condemns not only the attack on a restaurant in Kabul on 17 January, which took lives, including those of four members of the United Nations family in Afghanistan, but also all use of force and violence in any form against anyone. Once again, I would like to express my condolences to the families of all victims, as well as my appreciation for the work of UNAMA's staff.

I wish to reiterate the long-term commitment of the Slovak Republic to providing assistance and training

to the Afghan National Security Forces. I would also like to encourage the Afghan forces to continue in their transition at what the Secretary-General described in his report as a greater operational tempo, despite targeted attacks by anti-Government elements on Afghan forces.

The prevention and management of security challenges will be crucial, especially ahead of and during Afghanistan's national elections next month. In that regard, we fully support the calls of the Special Representative, Mr. Kubiš, on the Afghan authorities and the independent electoral bodies to ensure that the polls are credible, that any concerns are voiced prior to the elections and that the level of transparency is as high as possible.

We would like to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Afghan authorities with regard to the preparations for the upcoming elections, which remain on track for the scheduled polling date of 5 April. We hope that all candidates and election workers will be able to perform their duties in the run-up to the elections without being threatened by those who seek to disrupt the firm will of the Afghan people to live peacefully in their country and to choose their own destiny and political leaders. The right of all Afghans to enjoy freedom and basic human rights, privileges and responsibilities should be protected and fought for.

We are pleased at the increasing participation of women in the transition process. The Commission on the Status of Women, which concluded its fifty-eighth session a few days ago, was enriched by a number of side events. Of those, I would like to note the event organized by my colleague, Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen of Finland, on 12 March.

On that occasion, we had the opportunity to welcome a group of politically active Afghan women, led by Afghan Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs Her Excellency Mrs. Fawzia Habibi. For those who cast doubt on the progress achieved in Afghanistan, such a workshop on security and the role of women, with the active participation of prominent Afghan representatives in New York, would have been unthinkable 13 years ago. Let me also express my appreciation of the fact that the Ministry of the Interior of Afghanistan continues to take steps to better protect and to empower female police and Ministry staff in fulfilment of its goal of recruiting and training a total of 10,000 female officers.

The progress mentioned has, to a great extent, been achieved with the assistance, performance and outreach of UNAMA. We note and highly appreciate not only internal activities assisting the Afghan authorities in the transition but also the regional outreach of UNAMA. It proves that the Mission pays the necessary attention to promoting fruitful collaboration among all countries of the region in facing threats that surpass their individual capacities. That approach is important, especially in fighting terrorism, cross-border trafficking and illegal trade. The Slovak Republic therefore supports the renewal of UNAMA's mandate with today's unanimous vote.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the people of Afghanistan on the upcoming Nowruz holiday.

The President (spoke in French): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Sahebzada Ahmed Khan (Pakistan): Allow me begin by expressing my heartfelt condolences to the people and the Government of Afghanistan on the demise of Vice-President Mohammad Qasim Fahim. His invaluable contribution to the peace, prosperity and stability of Afghanistan will long be remembered. Pakistan also condemns the 17 January terrorist attack in Kabul, and we express our sympathies and condolences.

We thank Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his effective leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and for his comprehensive briefing this morning. His visit to Pakistan last month provided an opportunity for a frank exchange of views, which we truly appreciate.

Pakistan strongly feels that UNAMA is a stabilizing factor in Afghanistan. Its continued role therefore remains crucial. We also welcome the adoption of resolution 2145 (2014) this morning. We thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for sharing his perspective with us. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/163), which provides an overview of developments in the region, and thank Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his positive evaluation of Pakistan with regard to bilateral relations.

As we celebrate Nowruz and a new beginning, the season of change is upon us in more than one way. In a little under three weeks, Afghans will go to the polls to exercise their democratic right. Timely, inclusive, transparent and credible elections are critical to the

continued stability of the country. We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's assessment that preparations are going well. We hope that the remaining challenges will also be addressed.

Pakistan, for its part, has no favourites. It will cooperate and work with the popular choice of our Afghan brothers and sisters. Others should also exercise such neutrality. A regional consensus on non-interference is therefore required. Let me also reassure Afghanistan that Pakistan remains committed to strengthening security along the border during the electoral process.

Elections are only the first challenge this year. Security and economic transformations also need to be carefully managed. The post-2014 Afghanistan remains critical to international and regional peace and security. It should therefore never be abandoned. An inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process is central to sustained stability. It needs to be expedited and pursued with persistence and perseverance. Our support for the process is unwavering. Our work remains primarily an Afghan-led process. We can at best encourage and facilitate that.

Pakistan feels that terrorists and extremists should not be allowed to influence relations, policies and decisions. Securing the Pakistan-Afghanistan border through consistent vigilance and effective management is therefore a necessity, and the strengthening of border controls a priority. The activation of the Joint Commission on Border Management in early February is a positive step. We hope that it will facilitate real-time communication and improve security on the ground.

Increased opium production in Afghanistan and the growing adverse impact of drugs on Afghans themselves, as well as the link between drugs and terrorism, are well established. The role of the international community, led by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNAMA, remains imperative to countering that threat.

Another issue of concern are the 3 million Afghan refugees who are still in Pakistan. The economic prospects outlined in the Secretary-General's report are not rosy. Without improving economic conditions, sustainable repatriation and reintegration will be very difficult. While we have extended the stay of refugees until the end of the year, a comprehensive plan for their return home needs to be drawn up.

Frequent high-level exchanges and the growing emphasis on bilateral trade, economic cooperation and regional collaboration represent Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's forward-looking vision of a peaceful and prosperous neighbourhood. The Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan trilateral summit last month, the fullest summit-level interaction between Pakistan and Afghanistan in the past eight months, continued that momentum. The meeting of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission in February was another important milestone in that regard. Coupled with contacts in the security and intelligence fields, such exchanges have created a real momentum, and we hope to continue building on that impetus.

Our multidimensional relationship is not restricted to official visits. People-to-people contacts are also growing. Afghan students are studying in Pakistani institutions, laying the foundation for a brighter, collaborative future.

Let me conclude by quoting Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Ankara. He said,

"Afghanistan today is at a defining moment in its history. This is a time for all Afghans to come together, make peace and rebuild their country."

We are with them on that road.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Grunditz (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden. We fully support the statement by the observer of European Union but would like to add a few remarks.

We, too, would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2014/163), and the Special Representative for his briefing. I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his statement.

The upcoming elections will, if successful, be the first democratic and peaceful transfer of power in Afghanistan's history. Their importance for the consolidation of Afghanistan's democracy cannot be overstated. We commend the Government for the progress made in preparing for the elections and for creating the space for a lively and meaningful debate about Afghanistan's future. The task now is to ensure that the elections are credible, inclusive and transparent. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

(UNAMA) has an important support function, as it does for the 2015 parliamentary elections as well.

Afghanistan has made real progress over the past decade in areas such as education, health and infrastructure. It is imperative that the momentum of progress be sustained in order for Afghanistan to emerge stronger and more self-reliant. The achievements made so far need to be safeguarded. UNAMA has a vital role to play in ensuring that the partnership between Afghanistan and the international community under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework is realized to its full extent.

Only an inclusive political solution can secure stability in the country. We fully back the continuation of UNAMA's good offices to support an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. A continuing political role for the United Nations in Afghanistan, coupling political engagement and effective donor coordination, will also be important after 2014, not least for the development efforts that remain ahead. We underline the importance of a continued local and regional field presence and adequate financing for the Mission.

UNAMA has an important role in promoting Government engagement and donor coordination. There is also a need for strengthened coordination across United Nations agencies present in Afghanistan, thereby promoting the concept of the United Nations delivering as one. As more donors channel their funding through United Nations financing mechanisms, that role becomes increasingly vital.

For several of the Nordic countries, Afghanistan is already their largest bilateral development cooperation partner. The foundation for that is the strong domestic political and popular support in the countries concerned. Our Governments and national parliaments consider human rights, in particular women's rights, a core issue when deciding on future financial and political support to Afghanistan. It is important that the Afghan political leadership show firm commitment in promoting women's rights, tackling corruption and safeguarding the well-being of its people. Issues such as the full implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women, continued efforts to increase safe and secure access to quality education for women and girls, and guarantees for their equal political participation in decision-making will remain crucial.

Freedom of the media is particularly important in the context of both the upcoming elections and the building of a free, open and transparent society. Progress has been achieved, but threats remain towards the media. That was recently highlighted by the horrible assassination of the Swedish journalist Nils Horner in Kabul and by recent cases of violence against reporters in Mazar-e-Sharif.

The humanitarian situation remains a cause for concern, not least with regard to health and the increasing numbers of displaced persons. All efforts must be made to ensure humanitarian access. Further attacks against humanitarian personnel are unacceptable. We welcome efforts to improve humanitarian coordination and the establishment of a common humanitarian fund. We would like to encourage more donors to channel funding through the United Nations pooled funds.

In conclusion, the Nordic countries acknowledge the Afghan Government's efforts to take its commitments forward. We encourage the Government to continue its demanding work and to push forward during the upcoming elections. Benchmarks are not only factors in building the confidence of the international community; they are vital above all in building a more democratic, prosperous and stable Afghanistan for all its citizens.

The President (spoke in French): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, and I take this opportunity to welcome the new Permanent Representative of Germany.

Mr. Braun (Germany): To start, let me thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2014/163), and his Special Representative, Mr. Jan Kubiš, for his briefing and for his availability for other functions during his time in New York. I also acknowledge Ambassador Tanin's presence in the Security Council today.

The German Government aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of European Union earlier in today's debate.

In three weeks' time, the Afghan people will elect a new president and provincial councils. For the first time in Afghanistan's history, power will be peacefully transferred to a new Administration. We commend the great efforts Afghanistan has made so far in the preparations for those elections. My Government is confident that free, fair and transparent elections will result in a legitimate outcome, thereby

further strengthening democracy in Afghanistan. We encourage the Afghan people, particularly women, to make full use of their constitutional rights and to actively participate in the elections.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has played a crucial role in support of preparations for the elections, contributing to building the capacities of Afghan authorities. For that reason, we see a continuing role for UNAMA in that area, pursuant to the Mission's mandate just extended by the Council.

However, with our shared focus on the elections, we must not forget that there are many other challenges lying ahead in Afghanistan. Preserving and consolidating gains in the protection and promotion of human rights is of the utmost urgency. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission remains a key partner in that regard. It is also of great importance to ensure the equal participation of all members of society, in particular women, in the shaping of the country and in its institution-building.

The security situation remains volatile. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have proven increasingly capable of responding to security challenges, although at a high cost. Continued support by the international community through the transition period and beyond would further strengthen the ANSF's capacities to provide security for all Afghans. As previously stated, Germany stands ready to contribute its share to that joint effort. To that end, the timely signing of the bilateral security agreement between Afghanistan and the United States is a necessary precondition and should not be delayed further.

At this critical juncture, Afghanistan needs to see continuity in the work of the United Nations on the ground. Supporting the Afghan Government's efforts to protect and promote human rights, increase coordination and efficiency of international support and implement its commitments under the Tokyo Framework requires a strong United Nations Mission with adequate resources and a presence throughout the country. We therefore welcome the extension of UNAMA's mandate for another 12 months.

To conclude, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and admiration for the work of the Special Representative and his team in Afghanistan. We are still mourning the death of four United Nations staff who died on 17 January in a heinous attack in Kabul.

Under such difficult circumstances, the United Nations continues to do great work in the service of the Afghan people. Germany will continue to extend its support to UNAMA in fulfilling its mandate.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Eler (Turkey): I would like to begin my statement by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his comprehensive briefing. I would also like to extend my condolences to the Afghan people on the passing of First Vice-President Mohammed Qasim Fahim, an exemplary Afghan leader who was known for his conciliatory approach and bridge-building capabilities.

Afghanistan stands at a crucial crossroads, with key political, security and economic transformation processes under way. The coming months, especially after the 5 April presidential and provincial elections, will have an enormous impact on the way in which the next decade will unfold.

Resolution 2145 (2014), on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), arrives at a timely moment, when change and uncertainty dominate the Afghanistan agenda. Maintaining the comprehensive UNAMA mandate will provide tangible assurance of the United Nations continued assistance to the Afghan Government and people. We believe that Afghanistan's future should be based on a conscious strategy drawing strength from local ownership and seeking to pull together various efforts into a meaningful whole. That understanding is fully reflected in the resolution.

Despite significant improvements in health, education, development, infrastructure and human rights, Afghanistan will continue to need the support of the international community for many years to come.

Security, accessibility and inclusiveness will be the three grave challenges of the upcoming elections. Following the elections, security threats are likely to continue and even increase in the short run. Meanwhile, good governance, aid transparency and combating corruption will need to be prioritized, in line with the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, while agreements on legal frameworks to define the nature of the international community's military assistance will need to be drawn up. The tasks that the newly elected Government will face are daunting in nature.

At this vital juncture, the international community should continue investing in positive scenarios for the future of the country. In the short run, that entails the successful conduct of the April elections and the preservation of the current level of security. More crucially, perceptions of a power vacuum that could be filled by terrorist or organized crime groups must be broken. International support to capacity-building and good governance must continue. In addition, we must continue to support responses to the humanitarian challenges faced.

We fully support the human rights mandate of UNAMA. Addressing matters involving grave human rights violations, particularly violence against women and girls, and the issue of civilian casualties should be prioritized, in both the short- and the long-term. Local ownership of human rights matters is essential to ensuring durable solutions in that area.

As the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place last week, I would like to extend my great appreciation to the Afghan officials and human rights defenders who face daily threats and challenges in their work to enhance the human rights of Afghan women and girls.

There is heightened awareness of Afghanistan's problems among its regional partners, as well as increased ownership. The Istanbul Process maintains a comprehensive regional approach on integrating Afghanistan into the region and facing regional challenges as a whole, and therefore reflects that spirit. We look forward to the next Istanbul Process ministerial meeting in China. We also continue to support all trilateral, quadrilateral and multilateral initiatives aimed at the well-being of the Afghan people. In that context, the most recent trilateral dialogue among Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey that took place on 12 and 13 February, in Ankara, has been useful and successful.

In conclusion, I would like to voice our strong support of the crucial role that the United Nations will continue to play during and post transition. Our commitment to the needs of the United Nations regarding Afghanistan will serve as insurance in protecting the achievements of the past 13 years on the ground.

I would particularly like to commend the valuable efforts of the United Nations and of UNAMA, which should be supported with sufficient means and resources.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt condolences to the families and colleagues of all victims of the heinous terrorist attack in Kabul in January, among which there were UNAMA personnel who lost their lives working for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Turkey will remain in solidarity with the Afghan people and will continue to contribute to a safe, secure and prosperous Afghanistan, as we have done for many decades.

The President (spoke in French): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to start by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his briefing and comprehensive report on the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and for his analysis of the current situation in Afghanistan. I also thank Ambassador Tanin for his informative statement. I express my thanks to the Secretary-General for the report contained in document S/2014/163. I would like briefly to touch upon a few points regarding the prevailing situation in Afghanistan.

First, this year Afghanistan is approaching a critical moment in its history. The upcoming elections, the security and political issues associated with the transfer of power and the end of the presence of the international forces will all culminate during the coming months. We hope that the combined efforts of the Afghan Government and the United Nations will lead the process to improved durability and the strengthening of peace, stability and security in Afghanistan and the region.

Secondly, as a neighbouring country of Afghanistan, we share a critical interest in Afghanistan's security and long-term stability and its socioeconomic development. Afghanistan's continuing engagements with its neighbours and regional partners in the areas of trade, economic exchange and development projects must be supported and strengthened. Such economic ties work to cement stability in Afghanistan and in the region. In that regard, our continuing bilateral cooperation is particularly focused on security matters, counter-narcotics efforts, development projects and economic cooperation aimed at infrastructure areas involving roads, railroads, energy, mining and minerals and agriculture, among others.

Thirdly, as the drawdown of the international military forces is on this year's agenda, there are some security concerns involved. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, the United Nations recorded 20,093 security incidents in Afghanistan in 2013 — a 14 per cent increase in casualties inflicted upon Afghan civilians and a reversal of the decline recorded in 2012. A portion of those were caused by the military operations of the international forces in Afghanistan. Attacks on civilians under any pretext and by whomever is condemnable and must be halted.

Fourthly, regarding the return of refugees, we look forward to the full implementation of the relevant agreements between the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations of 31 March 2013, aimed at setting up a team to seek joint solutions and integrated approaches to refugees. We urge the international community to strengthen and expedite efforts to create the conditions conducive for the sustainable repatriation of refugees and their full rehabilitation and reintegration into their homeland.

Fifthly, with respect to the counter-narcotics efforts, we are concerned about the possible increase in opium poppy cultivation, particularly in the north and north-east areas of Afghanistan. We welcome the initiative taken by the Afghan Minister of Counter Narcotics to organize a Good Neighbourly Relations Declaration conference in Kabul on 28 and 29 January, with the participation of ministers or heads of counter-narcotics institutions from China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. We hope that, with the strong support and commitment of international donors, Afghan authorities and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the menace of drug cultivation and drug trafficking, a main source of income for extremist and terrorist groups, will be curtailed to a great extent.

Sixthly, we support UNAMA, as well as United Nations agencies, in fulfilling their mission to provide assistance to the peace, stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan through a robust regional engagement on issues such as border security, immigration, the return of refugees and drug control measures. The role of UNAMA should be further strengthened in the light of the developments expected in Afghanistan this year. The future role of the United Nations in Afghanistan is going to grow and become more multifaceted, and sometimes much more complicated. We therefore regret the recent decision of the General Assembly to reduce its 2013 budget for UNAMA by \$4.9 million. As indicated

during recent visits of Mr. Kubiš to Tehran, we are, as always, ready to support UNAMA and steadfast in our support for the Mission and its activities.

I would like to join other speakers who congratulated Afghanistan and the Afghan people on the occasion of Nowruz, the day that has been recognized by the General Assembly as the International Day of Nowruz since 2009. I wish Afghanistan a New Year filled with peace and prosperity.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Grant (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to express my appreciation for the opportunity to address the Security Council.

This year, Afghanistan will witness a number of significant milestones — ones that will involve Afghans taking on a greater responsibility for the future direction of their country, as well as ones that will address the vital needs of democratization, security and peace.

On 5 April, Afghan citizens will exercise their right to elect the next Afghan President and the members of provincial councils. That historic day will mark Afghanistan's first democratic transition of power from one presidential leader to another. Over the past year, Afghanistan put into place a robust legislative framework, national institutions and local machinery to conduct credible, constitutional and inclusive elections. We welcome the efforts of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and the Ministry of the Interior, who have identified and addressed numerous security challenges to help ensure that all Afghans are able to participate in the elections. We are especially interested to see the success of measures that facilitate the enhanced participation of women. Canada is encouraged by the number of women voters registered thus far, and further calls on all Afghan citizens, Government officials, civil society organizations and the international community to increase their efforts to ensure the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of the electoral process leading to the elections of 5 April.

(*spoke in English*)

Since 2011, the Government of Afghanistan, with the assistance of the international community, has built a strong and capable Afghan National Security Forces that now leads security operations throughout the country. By 31 December 2014, those forces will have full responsibility for the security of Afghanistan,

as the International Security Assistance Force mission draws to an end. We can expect that the growing capability of those forces will be tested in the coming months by a determined insurgency. Nevertheless, with each passing day, Afghans are increasing their confidence in their security forces. Those outside of the political process should come to recognize that their future, their safety and security, and the future of Afghanistan, lies within a peace and reconciliation process. Canada is proud of the contribution we have made — and continue to make — in strengthening the ANSF. We call upon the Government of Afghanistan to sign without delay the requisite Afghanistan-United States bilateral security agreement and conclude the NATO-Afghanistan status-of-forces agreement to allow the international community to continue its military assistance to Afghanistan.

While Canada's military mission has ended, Canadian support to Afghanistan has not. Indeed, Canada has committed \$227 million in development assistance for 2014 to 2017, to maintain the hard-fought gains for women and girls through support for improved health, education, humanitarian assistance and human rights. In addition, Canada remains committed to the safety and security of Afghanistan through continued support to sustain the Afghan National Security Forces with \$330 million between 2015 and 2017.

Afghans themselves know that much remains to be done to improve the protection of human rights in their country. We note that the Government of Afghanistan recently released its report on the implementation of the elimination of violence against women law. Although that report satisfies one of the obligations under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, it also illustrates the startling reality that violence against women remains pervasive throughout Afghanistan. Canada has made enhancing human rights protections and empowering Afghan women and girls the focus of its development assistance for 2014 to 2017 and the priority in our relations with Afghanistan. We call upon the Government of Afghanistan to fully implement the elimination of violence against women law, and make every effort to guarantee the participation of women in all facets of Afghan life, be it in the security, political, economic or cultural domains. Canada stresses that all Afghan laws must ensure strong protections for women

and girls, as guaranteed by the Afghan Constitution and in line with Afghanistan's international commitments to protect human rights, particularly protecting Afghan women and girls from sexual and domestic violence and child early and forced marriage. Afghanistan's full potential cannot, and will not, be achieved without the full participation of all of its citizens.

Afghans also want an end to Government corruption. We see the vibrant youth and civil society movements in Afghanistan — over half of the population is under 25 years old — and we can see their appetite for change, for jobs, for an end to corruption and for a chance to compete in the regional and global economy. The Afghan Government must do more to combat corruption by becoming more accountable to its people and to international donors. Canada encourages the Government of Afghanistan to meet the benchmarks set out by the International Monetary Fund and to pass new laws to address the corruption that is eroding the public's trust at all levels of Government. If the international community is to continue its special level of engagement with Afghanistan, it will also need to be confident that tangible results are being achieved in the fight against Government corruption. Action on that front will also help generate the investor interest needed to grow and sustain the Afghan economy. Passing a minerals law that is in line with international standards would send a clear signal to the world's investors that Afghanistan is genuinely open for business.

In conclusion, Canada remains committed to helping Afghanistan become a more peaceful and prosperous country in the heart of Asia, one that is able to benefit from the vast economic opportunities available. In that vein, we emphasize that networks of terrorists deployed from neighbouring States must be held accountable, as must their supporters. Reconciliation that fails to enshrine the indispensable rights of women, advance a constitutional democracy or tackle endemic corruption is not reconciliation. The road to peace is fraught with perils and pitfalls, but it is increasingly one on which Afghans will lead the charge.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.